

THE EMERGENCE OF AUGUSTINE'S EARLY ECCLESIOLOGY (386-391)

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that the work is my own:

ABSTRACT

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This thesis is an attempt to determine the nature and development of Augustine's understanding of the church between his conversion (386) and his 'conscriptio' into the priesthood (391). The results of this study reveal that Augustine did begin to think 'ecclesiologically' during this period. Indeed, his ideas about the church are intimately intertwined with his personal development and they coalesced into what can be called his first ecclesiological synthesis.

Before his baptism (387), Augustine's Christianity evidenced no significant ecclesiological interest. His conversion was influenced heavily by neo-Platonism but was clearly Christian in character. It was his interaction with a small number of Milanese Christian neo-Platonists (including Ambrose) that most directly contributed to his conversion; ecclesial motivations were absent. At Cassiciacum, neo-Platonism was the basic intellectual construct employed to seek an understanding of the world and Christian faith. The connection between Augustine's new Christian lifestyle and the church was not obvious at the villa. His pre-baptismal Christianity was primarily individualistic, though his penchant for communal life and interaction was also beginning to manifest itself.

The little-discussed stay at Milan just prior to and following Augustine's baptism (April 24/25, 387) provided the seedbed of his earliest ecclesiological ideas. Differences which appear in his writings after Milan strongly suggest that Augustine's instruction there as a catechumen was more significant than is often indicated. The importance of the church, crystalized in his view of the church as Catholic teacher and 'mother of all Christians', emerged in his writings at Rome (387/388). In these works, written after his baptismal experience, he described Christian beliefs as the teachings of the church, something he had not done in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*. While it is not possible to identify his motivation with exactness, an analysis of relevant treatises demonstrates that Augustine absorbed these ideas of the church, if only in root form, from Ambrose and the general atmosphere of Catholic Milan.

In Rome, Augustine was increasingly exposed to Catholic Christian groups which were seeking to live out an ascetic ideal. Monastic/ascetic development in the West was still in a formative phase, and while Augustine did not imitate any of these examples, he was influenced by them. In addition he assumed the role of Catholic apologist, specifically against the Manichees, a move which reflected his new affinity with the 'rare and high office of teacher' in the church.

Returning from Italy to his home town of Thagaste, North Africa in the late summer of 388, Augustine was finally able to sift through and consolidate the many influences which he had encountered in Italy. He conceived of himself as one in the 'service of God' who was connected to the church in allegiance, but not in an institutional or official way. He identified with the 'learned men of the Catholic church' but adopted the role of an independent Christian teacher in his writings and communal activities. The structure of his Thagaste community was the result of a number of factors (*e.g.* the tradition of philosophic *otium*), among which the rising western monastic and ascetic trends provided significant but not exclusive input. At least through 390 the community is not properly understood as a monastery, though in some ways it was moving towards this form.

Augustine also began at Thagaste to think of the church as a theological object and as encompassing all believers (*e.g.* clergy, hermits, laity, etc.). An ascetic, but not extreme, ideal was the proper outworking of 'spiritual' Christianity for all. The seeds of Augustine's later well-known ecclesiological ideas (such as the wheat and tares, or the church as the city of God in the world and history) can be observed at Thagaste. Finally at Thagaste in late 390, identifiable ecclesiological understandings of the church in the world, in history, and of Augustine's own position in the church emerged. On the basis of his understanding of the church as a theological entity and the home of the 'spiritual', and motivated by his own Christian goals, Augustine decided that he would establish a clear, institutional connection to the church. His first, 'monastic' ecclesiological synthesis (part of an overall 'religious' synthesis in *On True Religion*) crystalized in his decision to establish a monastery. It was also the motivation behind his trip to Hippo – to 'recruit for' and 'found a monastery'. This construct was never fully implemented but left its legacy in many of the practical ecclesial innovations which Augustine brought to the see at Hippo and in the ecclesiological foci which found expression in his later works.

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ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS CITED AND METHODS OF REFERENCE

Reference and Critical Works or Series:

ACW	<i>Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation</i> (Westminster, MD, London, etc., 1946-)
Augustinus-Forschung	C. Mayer and K.H. Chelius, eds., <i>Internationales Symposium über den stand der Augustinus-Forschung</i> (vom 12. bis 16. April 1987 im Schloss Rauischholzhausen der Justus-Liebig-Universität Geissen), <i>Cassiciacum</i> 39 (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag 1989)
Aug.-Lex.	C. Mayer, ed., <i>Augustinus-Lexikon</i> (Basel: Schwabe 1986-)
Aug. Stud.	<i>Augustinian Studies</i> (Villanova, 1970-)
BA	<i>Bibliothèque Augustinienne, Oeuvres de saint Augustin</i> (Paris, 1941-)
Collectanea Augustiniana	J.C. Schnaubelt and F. Van Fleteren, eds., <i>Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine – 'Second Founder of the Faith'</i> (New York: Peter Lang 1990)
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> (Turnhout, 1953-)
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna, 1866-)
Encyclopedia, Di Berardino	A. Di Berardino, ed., <i>Encyclopedia of the Early Church</i> v. 1-2 (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 1992, trans. from <i>Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane</i>)
Encyclopedia, Ferguson	E. Ferguson, ed., <i>Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities</i> v. 846 (New York: Garland 1990)
FC	<i>The Fathers of the Church</i> (New York, Washington, DC, 1947-)
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i> (London, 1950-)
LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i> (London, Cambridge, MA, 1912-)
LCC	<i>The Library of Christian Classics</i> (London, Philadelphia, 1953-)
PL	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> (J.P. Migne, ed., Paris, 1844-1865)
Rech. Aug.	<i>Recherches Augustiniennes</i> (Paris, 1958-)
REA	<i>Revue des Études Augustiniennes</i> (Paris, 1955-)
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> (Paris, 1942-)
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i> (in TU, Berlin, Leuven, 1957-)

TU *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1882-)

Works of Augustine:

English titles have been used throughout the text for ancient works, Latin abbreviations in the notes. Corresponding abbreviations and titles for Augustine's and Ambrose's works cited in the thesis are given in the following list. See the bibliography for other editions and translations employed.

<i>Acad.</i>	<i>Contra Academicos libri tres</i> (Against the Academics), CCL 29 (1970)
<i>beata u.</i>	<i>De beata uita liber unus</i> (On the Happy Life), CCL 29 (1970)
<i>ciu.</i>	<i>De ciuitate Dei</i> (City of God), CCL 47-48 (1955)
<i>conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum libri tredecim</i> (Confessions), CCL 27 (1981)
<i>dial.</i>	<i>De dialectica</i> (On Dialectic), PL 32.
<i>diu. qu.</i>	<i>De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus</i> (83 Different Questions), CCL 44A (1975)
<i>En. in Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i> (Enarrations on the Psalms), CCL 38, 39, 40 (1956)
<i>ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i> (Letter(s)), PL 33 or CSEL 34.1-2 (1895); 44 (1904); 57 (1911); 58 (1923); and 88 (1981)
<i>f. et symb.</i>	<i>De fide et symbolo liber unus</i> (On Faith and the Creed), CSEL 41 (1900)
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i>	<i>De Genesi aduersus Manicheos libri duo</i> (On Genesis Against the Manichaeans), PL 34.
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad litteram</i> (Literal Meaning of Genesis), CSEL 28.1 (1894)
<i>gramm.</i>	<i>De gramatica</i> (On grammar), PL 32.
<i>imm. an.</i>	<i>De immortalitate animae liber unus</i> (On the Immortality of the Soul), CSEL 89 (1986)
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio libri tres</i> (On Free Will), CCL 29 (1970)
<i>mag.</i>	<i>De magistro liber unus</i> (The Teacher), CCL 29 (1970)
<i>mor. ecc.</i>	<i>De moribus ecclesiae catholicae</i> (On the Morals of the Catholic Church), CSEL 90 (1992)
<i>mor. Man.</i>	<i>De moribus Manicheorum</i> (On the Morals of the Manichaeans), CSEL 90 (1992)
<i>mus.</i>	<i>De musica libri sex</i> (On Music), PL 32.
<i>op. mon.</i>	<i>De opere monachorum liber unus</i> (The Work of Monks), CSEL 41 (1900)
<i>ord.</i>	<i>De ordine libri duo</i> (On Order), CCL 29 (1970)
<i>quant.</i>	<i>De animae quantitate liber unus</i> (The Greatness of the Soul), CSEL 89 (1986)

<i>retr.</i>	<i>Retractationum libri duo</i> (Review), CCL 57 (1984)
<i>rhet.</i>	<i>De rethorica</i> (On Rhetoric), PL 32.
<i>s.</i>	<i>Sermo/nes</i> (Sermon(s)), PL 34, s. 1-50 in CCL 41 (1961) ¹
<i>sol.</i>	<i>Soliloquiorum libri duo</i> (Soliloquies), CSEL 89 (1986)
<i>ymb. cat.</i>	<i>De symbolo ad catechumenos liber unus</i> (On the Creed for Catechumens), CCL 46 (1969)
<i>uera rel.</i>	<i>De uera religione liber unus</i> (On True Religion), CCL 32 (1962)
<i>ut. cred.</i>	<i>De utilitate credendi</i> (On the Usefulness of Belief), CSEL 25.1 (1891)

Works of Ambrose:

<i>bon. mort.</i>	<i>De bono mortis</i> (On the Good of Death), CSEL 32.1.2 (1897)
<i>exam.</i>	<i>Exameron</i> (Hexameron), CSEL 32.1.1 (1987)
<i>expl. sym.</i>	<i>Explanatio symboli</i> (An Explanation of the Sacraments), SC 25 (1961), CSEL 73 (1955)
<i>exp. Luc.</i>	<i>Expositio Euangelii Secundum Lucam</i> (Exposition of Luke), CCL 14 (1957)
<i>exp. Esaiiae</i>	<i>Expositio Esaiiae prophetae</i> (Exposition of Isaiah), <i>Fragmenta</i> , CCL 14 (1957)
<i>Iacob</i>	<i>De Iacob et uita beata</i> (On Jacob and the Happy Life), CSEL 32.2 (1897)
<i>Isaac</i>	<i>De Isaac uel anima</i> (On Isaac, or the Soul), CSEL 32.1-2 (1897)
<i>myst.</i>	<i>De mysteriis</i> (On the Mysteries), SC 25 (1961), CSEL 73 (1955)
<i>sacr.</i>	<i>De sacramentis</i> (On the Sacraments), SC 25 (1961), CSEL 73 (1955)

Reference Conventions:

Abbreviations are used in the notes, in parentheses in the text, and in the appendices. Editions are denoted by small superscript numbers in front of the date of publication. Citations to Augustine's works are always given in order of book, chapter, section (e.g. *Acad.* 2.2.3), except, of course, where there is only one book (e.g. *beata u.* 4.34). In the cases of *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* (*mor. ecc.*) and *De moribus Manichaeorum* (*mor. Man.*) the book numbers (1 and 2 used in the critical edition CSEL 90 (1992)) are not employed as these are two separate (though, of course, related) works as is made clear by the abbreviations.

With Latin citations, the text has been drawn from the most recent editions of either CCL or CSEL where possible; in almost all other cases the text has been taken from PL. In terms of orthography, 'i' has been used for 'j' and 'u' for 'v'. Also, all quotations within the Latin texts have been offset by quotation marks in place of the italics, underlining, or wide spacing employed in some editions. Otherwise, Latin selections follow the particular conventions of the edition cited (e.g. some editions capitalize the first word of a sentence others do not).

¹ cf. *Augustinus-Lexikon* (Schlusslieferung zu Vol. 1, fasc. 1/2: pp. I-LX, col. 1-24 (1994), XXXVIII-XXXIX) for other references.

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INTRODUCTION

Augustine's early life is as well documented as that of any other late antique figure. Of the numerous sources of information about his life,¹ the most striking and influential, his *Confessions*, predominately focuses on his early years up to 386. The first eight books of the *Confessions* reach their crescendo in the celebrated account of Augustine's dramatic conversion to Catholic Christianity in a Milanese garden. This thesis does not start with that famous but debatable event. Rather it is with the period of significant development following the conversion in 386 that this study is concerned,² for in many respects it is the years between 386 and 391 that formed and shaped the later Augustine of Hippo. These years contained a radical process of change and development in the thought of the young Augustine. This thesis focuses on the ecclesial side of this development. It is out of this process in these early Christian years and with the tools gained from them, that Augustine came to exercise his enormous impact as presbyter and then bishop of Hippo and on later Latin ecclesiology. In light of his personal development and ecclesial background, Augustine's progress up to the year 386 will be outlined.³ Even more useful, Augustine's general passage through the years 386-391 will be plotted in detail; years which were formative for the Christian Augustine and which witnessed his gradual but steady progress from Christian assent and personal commitment to active Christian involvement and coherent Christian understanding.⁴ These later years provide an obvious ecclesial frame: in 386/387 Augustine committed himself to Catholic Christianity and entered the church; and in 391 he was ordained into the clergy of the church. The intervening process between these two points, while not straightforward, was one of significant ecclesial development.

¹ such as his: letters, sermons, reminiscences in works, and *Retractationes*; or Possidius' *uita Augustini*.

² a period which has suffered some neglect in comparison to the dominating focus of scholarly attention on Augustine's conversion and on the immediate years and influences leading up to the conversion.

³ indeed, in light of Augustine's *Confessions* and the enormous amount of modern scholarship on these early years, such an outline is almost obligatory.

⁴ there are many brief accounts of Augustine's life, but the standard reference in this introduction is the article 'Augustinus (uita)' by G. Bonner in the *Augustinus-Lexikon* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990, C. Mayer, ed.), 519-550.

Personal Development and Ecclesial Influences in the Years up to 386

Augustine's birth did not foreshadow in any way his subsequent enormous contribution to the church. Augustine was born in 354 in a small provincial town in North Africa. He was born into a Christian home, but not one of extreme devotion or prominent social standing.⁵ Nevertheless, there was a clear religious orientation to his earliest years. He was made a catechumen as an infant, and he later received elementary Christian instruction.⁶ Monnica became the great influence, especially in religious terms, of Augustine's youth. She remained for him, especially after he went to Carthage, the symbol of solid (if somewhat simple) Catholic devotion in contrast to his spiritual vacillations.⁷ However, despite Monnica's religious input, the significance of his childhood experience of the church should 'not be pressed'.⁸ Augustine's childhood and youth attendance at church may well have been regular, but should not be assumed or forced to carry more significance than the minimal evidence allows.⁹ While his childhood incorporated a Christian orientation, there does not seem to have been a significant ecclesial focus.¹⁰ His comments about the church of his youth are sparse and presented in general terms and provide no reason to suggest that his Christian instruction was thorough or led to any deep understanding;¹¹ a more

⁵ his father Patricius did not become a catechumen until Augustine was about 16 (*conf.* 2.3.6) and even Monnica, whose later devotion is so famous, was as concerned for Augustine's education and professional advance as for his advance in the church.

⁶ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 522; cf. *conf.* 1.11.17; *Acad.* 2.2.5.

⁷ indeed, her undoubted significance in Augustine's spiritual development, which he described so carefully in the *Confessions*, can almost suggest the conclusion that his eventual commitment to the Catholic church in Milan – to what he called the church 'of my parents' – was inevitable (cf. *conf.* 5.14.25).

⁸ to use Bonner's phrase, 'Augustine as Biblical Scholar', *The Cambridge History of the Bible* v. 1 (1970), 542: 'In short, Augustine as a boy can hardly have known much of Christian family life, and his reference made soon after this conversion to the religion "implanted in him in his childhood days" [*Acad.* 2.2.5; *ut. cred.* 1.2] ought not to be pressed'. Still, the faith of his mother and, later, father did have a permanent effect on Augustine's outlook. 'Thus, from his infancy, Augustine was taught to regard himself as a Christian; while there is no evidence that he was particularly well-oriented or unusually observant as a boy ... he seems always to have taken it for granted that his choice of religion was among various forms of Christianity – «illam religionem, quae pueris nobis insita est et medullitus implicata» (*Acad.* 2,5) – and not between Christianity and some other faith' (Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 522).

⁹ notwithstanding J. van Oort's discussion (*Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (1991), 25-31) which concludes that the early Augustine was an educated and 'regular' Catholic. Any strong emphasis on or attribution of ecclesial significance to these early years is based on a reading back of much later references to Augustine's 'parents'; references which do not necessarily carry implications for the earlier period.

¹⁰ with respect to baptism, for example, except in the case of a life-threatening medical emergency, there was certainly no intention of Augustine's receiving this sacrament of initiation to the church or the commitment it entailed (*conf.* 1.11.17).

¹¹ cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 39.

significant daily issue for him was secular schooling.¹²

Like any late antique people of curial rank, even if modest means, Augustine's parents aspired that their child should reach professional success, preferably in the political/cultural arena. The key to such aspirations in the later fourth century was education, especially rhetorical education. Such education and its goal of professional worldly success was to be the most consistent determinant of Augustine's early life. Augustine's parents managed to secure the funds for a basic education in the local school in Thagaste, followed by more formal preparatory education at Madauros. In light of his academic promise, he then returned home for a year (at age 16) while funds were saved, to send him in 370 to Carthage to study rhetoric.¹³

The significance of the time in Carthage was manifold but only a few relevant points can be made here about Augustine's education (formal and informal) in the cultural center of North Africa. Essentially, Carthage introduced the three significant directions that would dominate his early years: ambition, wisdom, and Manichaeism. As mentioned, his primary purpose for coming to Carthage was to gain the educational basis and contacts from which to pursue his (and his parents') goal of worldly success. This educational basis was attained and steady progress towards success marked his years at Carthage as a student and later as a professor of rhetoric. Significantly, also at Carthage Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius*, which inspired him to the individual pursuit of wisdom. This basic exhortation to philosophy brought about fundamental changes in Augustine's outlook on (if not direction of) life,¹⁴ especially instilling in him a love of wisdom and an ideal of a life of complete devotion to it. This exhortation to wisdom also prompted him to take up the Christian scriptures, revealing his basic Christian orientation.¹⁵ However, these were a great disappointment to him on account of their poor style and very earthy descriptions.¹⁶ Accordingly, he put them aside, despairing of finding any truth in such crass books. In a sense, the church of his childhood had failed; and, disappointed, Augustine abandoned hope in it.¹⁷ 'It was in this state of disappointment that Augustine encountered Manichaeism'.¹⁸

¹² *conf.* 1.9.14; 1.13.20-1.14.23; 2.3.5; *cf.* G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 523.

¹³ although not always exceptional in his studies (*cf. conf.* 1.9.14; 1.13.20; 1.14.23), Augustine was clearly able and his parents probably sent him to Carthage with the hope of at least modest success there.

¹⁴ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 524; *cf. beata u.* 1.4; *sol.* 1.10.17; *conf.* 3.4.7.

¹⁵ *conf.* 3.4.8-3.5.9.

¹⁶ *conf.* 3.5.9, *cf. conf.* 3.7.13.

¹⁷ even if he retained an attraction to the name of Christ.

¹⁸ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 524.

Augustine joined the Manichees in his 19th year and remained affiliated with them for the next decade.¹⁹ The great significance of these years with the Manichees can only be touched upon briefly here, but its influence was to shape Augustine's early development religiously (*e.g.* contra Catholicism) and intellectually (*e.g.* instilling particular understandings of the nature of good and evil, or of spirit).²⁰ In contrast to Catholic Christianity, especially its rough scriptures and seemingly blind faith, the claim of Manichaeism to be a Christian religion based on reason not authority, its criticism of the Old Testament, and its more cultured literature and ambiance²¹ appealed to Augustine.²² Moreover, because Augustine could enter Manichaeism at the lower of its two levels of devotion, namely, as one of its 'hearers' as opposed to one of the more rigorous 'elect', the sensual side of Augustine's lifestyle and, more importantly, his professional progress remained unhindered.²³ Augustine's conversion to Manichaeism distressed Monnica greatly and for a time she barred him from her door.²⁴ However, in time things settled and generally Augustine's life as professor making professional progress in Carthage continued.²⁵ It is noteworthy that Augustine's attention was on religion *intellectually*, and it is also significant that he was initiated into the idea of a two-level religious community.²⁶ Despite these religious and intellectual developments, ambition remained the primary guiding force in his life.

The attractions of Manichaeism did not, however, fully materialize for Augustine. As he encountered problems in its teaching (*e.g.* between then contemporary astronomy and its cosmology) or the criticisms of educated friends (*e.g.* Nebridius, *conf.* 7.2.3) or Catholics (*e.g.* Elpidius, *conf.* 5.11.21), his Manichaean ardor cooled and in time real doubts began to emerge.²⁷ In the Manichee circles of Carthage, these questions met with the simple exhortation to 'wait for Faustus', a leading Manichee teacher who

¹⁹ *ut. cred.* 2; *conf.* 4.1.1; G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 525.

²⁰ in this thesis, elements are recalled from this 'Manichaean' time which are germane, but in general the period is not addressed since it: 1. is for the most part not directly relevant to the discussion; 2. was not a time of ecclesial attention even if certain elements might have colored Augustine's early views of religious community; and 3. lies outside the chronological parameters of this consideration. Augustine's significant anti-Manichaean writings from the period 386-391, however, are discussed in detail.

²¹ including perhaps its liturgy; 'worship' or 'corporate' activity were not, however, generally an emphasis in Augustine's references to the Manichees, esp. those to his years as a 'hearer'.

²² G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 524-525.

²³ indeed, his Manichee contacts were probably an asset at more than one point in his professional career.

²⁴ *conf.* 3.11.19; who from this point on in the *Confessions* is the archetype of Catholic devotion.

²⁵ Augustine had returned to Carthage under the patronage of a wealthy Thagaste citizen, Romanianus, after a brief period of teaching back in Thagaste; cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 64-65.

²⁶ in this, the association of physical purity (esp. chastity) with full religious commitment or the differentiation between full commitment of life and simple assent and affiliation, for example, were significant legacies.

²⁷ cf. G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 525-526.

was to visit. The failure of Faustus to answer Augustine's questions, albeit with winsome candor, led to Augustine's fundamental disillusionment with Mani and to intellectual uncertainty. Interestingly, this disillusionment was not decisive and he remained a nominal adherent to the sect, though he would gradually slide into Academic skepticism over the next years.²⁸ Although he was certainly affected by his intellectual and religious doubts, they were not enough to alter (indeed, they may have encouraged) his focus on secular ambition.

In due course, his professional ambition²⁹ and frustration with work at Carthage combined to motivate his departure for Rome. Thus, in the summer of 383, he journeyed from Carthage to Rome.³⁰ After a brief stay with the Manichees in Rome, Augustine had discerned that teaching conditions were still not ideal and so acted when he saw the chance to procure a position as public orator and professor of rhetoric at the seat of the imperial court in Milan.³¹ With the help of his Manichee contacts, he obtained this appointment from Symmachus, Urban Prefect of Rome.³² Therefore, in the autumn of 384, Augustine went to Milan. His arrival there marked the success of his professional career, but it also marked a period of great susceptibility to new ideas. Augustine later wrote, 'At that time, there was no one more open to being taught than I was' (*ut. cred.* 8.20).³³ To come in such a state to as stimulating an intellectual climate as Milan was to invite a profound change of outlook. In fact, although Augustine would make the kind of professional progress that he might have hoped for at Milan,³⁴ above all, this was to be a place of crucial intellectual and spiritual progress. In the *Confessions*, Augustine listed the most important of the figures who influenced this progress in the same breath as he spoke of coming to the imperial city: 'And so I came to Milan to Ambrose the bishop, known throughout the world as among the best of men, devout in your worship' (*conf.* 5.13.23).³⁵

Among the manifold changes which took place during these critical years at Milan (384-386)³⁶ was a significant change from a position of no confidence in the faith of

²⁸ moreover, just as Cicero's injunction to pursue 'wisdom' had indirectly motivated Augustine toward the Manichees earlier, it appears that in these later years Cicero's presentation of Academic skepticism prodded Augustine from his complacency regarding the doubtful claims of the Manichees.

²⁹ cf. esp. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 67.

³⁰ for this and other 'voyages' by Augustine in the early period and generally, see O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 430-435, cf. 119-159.

³¹ *conf.* 5.12.22-23.

³² G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 526.

³³ to quote P. Brown's paraphrase of the Latin in *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 81 (*oportunitissimum ergo me ac ualde docilem tunc inuenire posset, qui posset docere.* CSEL 25. 25).

³⁴ which may have led to a significant imperial civil service position, such as a proconsular office.

³⁵ *et ueni Mediolanum ad Ambrosium episcopum, in optimis notum orbi terrae, pium cultorem tuum.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 56; CCL 27. 70.

³⁶ see G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 526-531, for a brief introduction to the events and issues in the period as well as select references to the vast scholarship on

the Catholic church to a position as a skeptical catechumen of that church. Augustine records that when he arrived in Milan he went to the Catholic church to hear Ambrose to see 'if his oratorical skill merited the reputation it enjoyed' (*conf.* 5.13.23).³⁷ Ambrose's rhetoric pleased Augustine, but the principal attraction was in the 'charm' of the bishop's language. In terms of Ambrose's message, however, Augustine remained dismissive; he had no hope of finding truth in the Catholic church.³⁸ Still, he continued to attend Ambrose's declamations and in time was overtaken by the bishop's arguments.³⁹ He came to think that his childhood religion could be rescued and defended against the Manichees by the 'spiritual' scriptural interpretation and coherent expositions of the Catholic faith which Ambrose presented.⁴⁰ However, though defensible, Augustine was still not convinced that Catholic Christianity was true.⁴¹ Intellectually, he had adopted a position of skepticism following his disillusionment with the Manichees; yet, Ambrose's influence and the possibility of finding truth in the Catholic church prompted him to become a catechumen as a middle position from which to reserve judgment on Catholic claims in his doubt.⁴² Augustine remained in this 'middle position' for a considerable time at Milan, and this period stimulated ideas including revived interest in the pursuit of wisdom and the ideal of flight from the world. For example, Augustine and a small group of his friends seriously discussed

this time. See also, G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 71-90; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 79-114; H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), xix-xxv; P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (21968); G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', in C. Mayer and K.H. Chelius, eds., *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 9-25; and J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954). Relevant aspects from this period and the scholarship on it are addressed at points esp. in the first two chapters of the thesis.

³⁷ *et studiose audiebam disputantem in populo, non intentione qua debui, sed quasi explorans eius facundiam, utrum conueniret famae suae an maior minorue proflueret quam praedicabatur.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 56; CCL 27. 70. Augustine explicitly notes in this passage that he did not come to Ambrose 'as a teacher of the truth, which I had no confidence of finding in your church' (altered from Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 88: *primo quidem non tamquam doctorem ueri, quod in ecclesia tua prorsus desperabam*).

³⁸ *conf.* 5.10.19.

³⁹ *conf.* 5.13.23 *ad fin.* and following; cf. J.P. Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 373.

⁴⁰ especially in light of the eventual neo-Platonic realization of incorporeal spiritual reality.

⁴¹ *conf.* 5.14.24; Augustine was uninterested in corporate identification or religious experience for their own sakes. Such things were secondary to and dependent on the discovery of and access to truth and understanding.

⁴² see *conf.* 5.14.25 *ad fin.*; *conf.* 6.4.6. In terms of commitment, while the position of a Catholic catechumen signified an overt break with the Manichees, it was not a decisive position, especially in Milan (where political connections played a role as well, see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 81: 'It was a politic gesture of conformity; and, once a catechumen, he could have postponed indefinitely the decisive step of being baptized'). There is also a sense in which Augustine's previous nominal status as a Manichee hearer probably reinforced the provisional nature of anything less than a full commitment to the Catholic church. Regardless, the position of skepticism required certainty before making a decision; cf. *conf.* 6.4.6. G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 527 and 528 n. 44, notes that: 'It was in this context that he became aware of the need for some authority on which to base belief'.

the idea of retiring from public life into a small philosophic, shared community.⁴³ Despite the restraint from such ideas and spiritual devotion exercised by his ambitious pursuit of professional success, this time of spiritual ferment meant that, 'At the beginning of 386 Augustine had reached a critical point in his spiritual development'.⁴⁴

The answer to Augustine's intellectual problems came, above all, in neo-Platonism. In mid-386, Augustine obtained certain neo-Platonic writings probably from the circle of neo-Platonists/Christians who seemed to associate in Milan.⁴⁵ In these writings Augustine 'found the doctrine of God and His Word – though not, significantly, that of the Incarnation'.⁴⁶ The scholarship on Augustine's interaction with neo-Platonism at Milan is voluminous and only a couple of relevant observations can be made here.⁴⁷ The first is that there was a connection between neo-Platonism and Catholic figures in the church. Ambrose and Simplicianus are the two most notable Catholic examples who communicated insights imbued with neo-Platonism to Augustine during this time.⁴⁸ Second, the encounter with neo-Platonism was linked to a renewed reading of scriptures by Augustine, especially those of Paul.⁴⁹ Essentially, Christianity and neo-Platonism both offered a clear path in Augustine's search for truth and each encouraged his pursuit of the other. They combined with his own doubts to finally break his affinity to the Manichees.

The immediate significance of neo-Platonism was to introduce Augustine to a concept of spirit as incorporeal reality. The enduring legacy of this spiritual

⁴³ cf. *conf.* 6.14.24.

⁴⁴ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 528, who summarizes: 'he was a Catholic catechumen, attracted to orthodox Christianity, but held back by ambition and sensuality, and by an intellectual difficulty which was a legacy inherited from Manichaeism: the nature of evil [*conf.* 7.5.7], which made it impossible for Augustine to conceive of it in any form except as something material; and this immediately raised problems, if God the creator were to be conceived as being wholly good: [*conf.* 7.5.7]. To this difficulty he could see no solution'.

⁴⁵ among representatives, Bonner includes: Hermogenianus, Zenobius, and Mallius Theodorus ('Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 529). There is debate over the coherence of the neo-Platonic 'circle' at Milan, but it is clear that a number of figures there, both Christian and non-Christian, were engaged with and influenced by neo-Platonism around the time of Augustine's sojourn there. The texts which Augustine read included selections from Plotinus and, probably, Porphyry.

⁴⁶ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 529; cf. *conf.* 7.8.13; *ciu.* 10.29.

⁴⁷ see n. 36 for discussions of this aspect of Augustine's time in Milan. In summary, however, 'The discovery of Neoplatonism was unquestionably a major event in the history of Augustine's intellectual development. Whether he passed through a period of "autonomous Platonism" is debatable. Equally open to discussion is the exact nature of the contemplative experiences enjoyed by Augustine during this time', G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 529.

⁴⁸ *beata u.* 1.4; H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxi, notes that Ambrose's sermons 'presented a Christian theology that combined aversion from pagan religion with a large ingredient of Neoplatonism'. See also P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 92; and J.J. O'Meara, 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism', *Rech. Aug.* 1 (1958), 101. The exact nature of Ambrose's neo-Platonic understanding at the time, or what exactly he communicated to Augustine, remains debatable; but the basic fact of influence has been established since the study of this connection by P. Courcelle (*Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1950, 1968), esp. 78-168).

⁴⁹ cf. *conf.* 7.9.13-15 and 7.21.27.

conception, especially in the years up to Augustine's ordination, was to create an ideal of the pursuit of a spiritual life before God, specifically, the ideal of ascent to God in or by the soul.⁵⁰ Thus, the goal of the life of devotion was the spiritual experience and understanding of God and the soul. Ultimately, these developments led to a conception of neo-Platonism as the true philosophy. In the context of 386, intellectually, neo-Platonism also helped resolve the problem of evil for Augustine, which remained as a most prominent vestige of the years with the Manichees, by 'teaching that it was not a substance but a lack; evil was simply the privation of good'.⁵¹

The religious, intellectual, and spiritual influences which Augustine encountered at Milan, especially 'the reading of the "libri Platoniorum" in 386, had', in Bonner's words, 'a very similar effect on Augustine to that of the *Hortensius* thirteen years earlier'; namely, they motivated a return to Christian scripture.⁵² In addition, Augustine began actively seeking Catholic Christian advice and direction, especially from the elder, Simplicianus. Simplicianus encouraged Augustine in his reading of the 'Platonic books' and in the way in which they pointed toward the Christian gospel. Simplicianus also related the conversion story of the great African rhetor Victorinus who had translated the Platonic books.⁵³ The story inspired Augustine.⁵⁴ Thus, Augustine was led to a state of intellectual assent by the combination of: neo-Platonic understanding of the spiritual realm; Ambrose's spiritual allegorical interpretations of the (especially Old Testament) scriptures; and his own overall conviction that spiritual truth, as understood in neo-Platonism, was properly contained and reached in Catholic Christianity. Intellectually, this change precipitated his conversion. However, while intellectual assent to Catholic spiritual Christianity was secured, the matter of lifestyle and commitment remained unchanged.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ in this view, the soul was incorporeal and the closest part of the person, in being, to God – who was the pinnacle and source of incorporeal reality.

⁵¹ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 529.

⁵² G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 530. See *Acad.* 2.2.5; Bonner notes that 'this passage is Augustine's earliest description of the beginnings of the process of thought which was eventually to lead him to seek Catholic baptism. Written in November 386, it agrees very well with his later account in *conf.* [7.20.26; 7.21.27]'

⁵³ *cf. conf.* 8.2.3-8.5.10. This conversion at Rome had been a significant public event.

⁵⁴ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 530. This narrative is discussed in detail in chapter two.

⁵⁵ *cf. conf.* 8.5.10. 'The difficulty now lay, not so much in the field of intellectual conviction as of habit – Augustine had become so settled in his worldliness and ambition that he lacked the power to break free' (G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 530). Moreover, along with ambition, the issue of continence had been poignantly highlighted for Augustine during this time as, for the sake of worldly advance, he had dismissed his long-faithful concubine to make way for a political marriage, but in the interim had taken on a mistress to sate his sexual appetite (*conf.* 6.12.22; 6.15.25; *cf. conf.* 8.1.2). Augustine's 'failed' neo-Platonic ascent to the One recorded in *conf.* 7.17.23, also seems to have emphasized his separation from truth and wisdom on account of his moral failings (*cf.* J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (1991), 34-35).

The precise events and nature of Augustine's conversion have been and remain fraught with many points of scholarly debate.⁵⁶ But this much is clear: in the state of mind of intellectual assent to Christian truth but retention of a life of less than full commitment to Catholic Christianity,⁵⁷ Augustine was exposed to information about Christian asceticism (about Antony, the clerks at Trier, and the monastery at Milan, *cf. conf.* 8.6.14-15). These ascetic examples of complete devotion to God presented Augustine with a stark contrast to himself.⁵⁸ The chastisement of the presentation of those who, without Augustine's ability to grasp incorporeal reality of God, still made the commitments that he felt unable or unwilling to make appears to have created an inner struggle centered around the figure of Continence.⁵⁹ In any case, these examples highlighted the areas of worldly ambition and continence for Augustine as central factors that restrained him from full devotion. The *Confessions* indicates that in his turmoil Augustine, probably recalling the role of scripture in Antony's conversion, turned to scripture for direction.⁶⁰ The exhortation of Romans 13.13 to forsake the lusts of the flesh and to 'put on Christ' summarizes the scriptural guidance he encountered; and finally, probably rather suddenly, the decision to follow the way of Christian devotion was made at the beginning of August 386.⁶¹

In a sense, Augustine's life up to the conversion in 386 (at least as he presented it) was a process of initiation. Thus, by this point in time, intellectually and personally, Augustine's desire for wisdom had finally centered on the pursuit of spiritual understanding and experience in incorporeal terms. Ecclesially, he had been restored to the religion of his youth, but his return to Catholic Christianity was an individual process lacking any real ecclesiological or ecclesiastical foci of attention. Conversion marked the final step in initiation into the path away from self and toward God. However, despite the considerable process and influences recorded in the *Confession* which brought Augustine to the point of conversion, this point was still primarily a beginning. In many respects, it was the real beginning of Augustine's life as he saw it in retrospect.

⁵⁶ the great body of scholarship on Augustine's conversion is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but for an excellent concise discussion and bibliography, see G. Madec 'Conuersio', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 7/8 (1994), 1282-1294.

⁵⁷ possibly an extended period; G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 531.

⁵⁸ *conf.* 8.7.17; 8.8.19; 8.11.27; *cf.* G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 531.

⁵⁹ *conf.* 8.11.27; *cf.* G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 531.

⁶⁰ *conf.* 8.12.29.

⁶¹ for balanced comments of the actuality of the conversion story and correctives to L. Ferrari's critique esp. of the reading of Romans 13, see F. van Fletern, 'St. Augustine's Theory of Conversion', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 65-67f. and n. 7.

Development from Conversion (386) to Ordination (391)

Augustine's progression over his first Christian year contradicts any idea of a sense of urgency following conversion. Instead, the sense is one of release, slow evaluation of his new life, and indeed recovery from the process of conversion.⁶² This very important year witnessed the appearance of the themes of Augustine's personal direction as a young Christian. Namely, he decided: to live in *otium* in a small community engaged in Christian (true) philosophy; to make a clear public commitment to God in baptism; and to live his life in 'service to God'. Augustine's actions are not of great devotion in the manner recorded earlier in the *Confessions* (6.2.2 *ad fin.*) of Monnica, for example, but rather of studied diligence and convalescence in truth.⁶³ Above all, in this first year, a confident sense of direction and establishment of a pattern of life as a Christian philosopher emerged.

Following his conversion, Augustine took no drastic steps. He completed the academic session so as to resign his position with minimal display.⁶⁴ He then retired for the vintage vacation to a villa at Cassiciacum made available to him by a friend Verecundus. At the villa, he and a circle of family and friends pursued philosophy. Elements of a basic religious lifestyle (including prayer and reading of scripture) were also present at the villa. Details of life and the philosophical focus of attention at Cassiciacum are preserved in his earliest writings, the *Dialogues*, which were based on disputations held by members of the group:⁶⁵ *Against the Academics*; *On the Happy Life*; *On Order*; and later at Cassiciacum his *Soliloquies* were also composed. In these works, Augustine emerges as a Christian philosopher,⁶⁶ operating on the basis of the combination of Christian authority and neo-Platonic reason.⁶⁷ The integration of neo-

⁶² which had been an emotionally, intellectually intense time, perhaps even causing real physical problems, cf. G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 532; and *conf.* 9.2.4.

⁶³ at Cassiciacum, there was an odd mixture of intellectual intensity and restful *otium* plus physical recovery; see the discussion in ch. 1.

⁶⁴ *conf.* 9.2.3 – at the end of the vacation (cf. *conf.* 9.5.13).

⁶⁵ there is much discussion of the *Dialogues* in connection with scholarship on the *Confessions*, esp. with regard to the latter's historicity. These are certainly not contradictory texts though there is an obvious difference in focus between them. Chapter one below addresses these issues and gives references to the literature. Bonner notes that, although 'allegedly based upon transcripts of discussions, ... it may be guessed that Augustine's personal contribution to the [*Dialogues*] as a whole was more considerable than the text suggests. The Cassiciacum dialogues are not, therefore, necessarily superior to the *conf.* as historical evidence for Augustine's conversion. They do, however, bear witness to his state of mind at a time when, after the emotional strain of his conversion experience, he was able to effect a happy reconciliation between philosophy and Christianity, seeing the one as leading to the other' (G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 532). In the immediate case of Cassiciacum itself, there is little conflict between the *Confessions* and the *Dialogues* since the *Confessions* does not speak at any length about the stay at Verecundus' villa and the *Dialogues* provide the only evidence for daily life there.

⁶⁶ cf. C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (1992), 5 and 10 *ad fin.*-11, who presents 'Augustine's early thought on beauty in terms of a "Christian philosophy"'.
⁶⁷ *Acad.* 3.20.43.

Platonism and Christianity and a lifestyle of religious philosophic otium are the dominant topics which emerge from these writings. In them, he referred to Christ as an unshakable authority, and to the Christian mysteries of the incarnation and Trinity; and he looked to neo-Platonism for the rational explanation of everything. He thought that God was the source of both the way of authority and the way of reason, between which there could be no possible conflict.⁶⁸ In connection with his conviction of the integration of neo-Platonism and Catholic Christianity as the path to the truth, to register his commitment to the Catholic church and to receive the cleansing authority of Christ, Augustine eventually returned to Milan in early 387 in order to enter preparation for baptism.

The period at Milan which followed was full of activity (though not urgency). Augustine's activities confirmed: his commitment to a life of philosophic *otium*; a sense of optimism deriving from his reconciliation of neo-Platonism and Catholic Christianity; and his commitment to undertake all he did in humility and service before God. Augustine resigned his public post at Milan at end of the vintage vacation and enrolled in the winter 386/387 as a candidate for baptism at the following Easter.⁶⁹ By this time, he was confident of the integration of Catholic Christianity and neo-Platonism and wrote optimistically on philosophy (specifically *On the Immortality of the Soul*) and on the liberal disciplines as preparation for spiritual understanding of God.⁷⁰ On the night of 24/25 April 387, Augustine was baptized at Milan by Ambrose. This was the conclusive definitive mark of his initiation and commitment to Catholic Christianity and the church.⁷¹ Moreover, his literary endeavors and his lifestyle of philosophic *otium* confirm the integration of authority and reason and of neo-Platonism and Catholic Christianity. His commitment to God and the church in baptism and to a life of service to God confirm that Augustine's pursuit of a life of 'true philosophy' was seen as pursuit of the spiritual life before and towards God. It is significant that the context of baptism was highly ecclesial. During his very frequent attendance in church in this context, Augustine would have experienced the most liturgical aspects of Milanese Catholic corporate worship. In one of the few discussions of experience in the church at Milan, Augustine recorded (*conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15) that he was impressed by the corporate worship and the saving plan of God mediated in the church which he

⁶⁸ J.J. O'Meara, *St. Augustine: Against the Academics*, ACW 12 (1951), 22.

⁶⁹ *conf.* 9.5.13-14.

⁷⁰ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 533.

⁷¹ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 533, who observes, 'Any argument that his conversion in 386 was to philosophy rather than to Catholic Christianity must take into account the fact that Augustine, like Victorinus before him [*conf.* 8.2.4f.], was prepared to receive the Christian sacrament, not being content to remain in a state of merely intellectual assent to Christianity, as a philosopher might have done'.

had just experienced. Following his baptism in Milan, Augustine decided to return to Africa to live in retirement. This decision clearly marks his renunciation of worldly ambition.⁷² Significantly, this decision was connected with the idea of living in 'service to God' (*conf.* 9.8.17). Therefore, Augustine's life of true philosophy must be appreciated and viewed in this light.

With a close group of friends and family, he spent his second year as a Christian in transit from Milan back to North Africa, from the public life in the seat of the imperial court to a quiet community in a small provincial town. In terms of Augustine's personal development, this period saw significant progress in his Christian interests, specifically in terms of Christian asceticism and scripture. Intent on returning to Africa, the group traveled to Ostia. There, the contemplative and Platonic aspects of Augustine's new Christianity were experienced vividly in his shared vision with Monnica.⁷³ This famous vision (*conf.* 9.10.23-24) typified the goal of the spiritual life, which was to come into the very presence of God. Practically, however, Monnica's sudden death at Ostia and the political blockade on travel from the port forced Augustine back to Rome in late autumn 387.⁷⁴ There, Augustine's writing on philosophy continued in more clearly Christian philosophic terms with refined attention to God and soul and, in *The Greatness of the Soul*, especially to the ascent of the soul to God. Generally, this period of transition (387/388) entailed the fruition of Augustine's previous life of true Christian philosophy under the heading of 'service to God'. In addition, he also began writing Catholic polemical treatises against the Manichees (specifically, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* (almost complete) and *On the Morals of the Manichaeans* (begun)). In these writings, he was interested to defend the Catholic scriptures, teaching, and ascetic practice. These interests represent the most significant new aspects of his time in Rome. Thus, this period of transition was a time of scriptural, ascetic, and doctrinal input. Augustine's use of scripture increased greatly in the writings at Rome, indicating his continued reading of the Bible.⁷⁵ Moreover, he was impressed by the ascetic communities of which he learned at Rome, though the legacy of this information would come to fruition later at Thagaste.⁷⁶ The question of the exact context remains,⁷⁷ but his continued

⁷² G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 533.

⁷³ H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxiii, notes that in Augustine's description of 'the vision at Ostia shared by Monica and himself ... the vocabulary is deeply indebted to Plotinus'.

⁷⁴ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432.

⁷⁵ particularly noticeable is the attention to Romans and 1 Corinthians in the New Testament, and the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Biblia Augustiniana A.T. – Le livre de la Sagesse* (1970), 30-32; see also Appendix C below.

⁷⁶ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 533.

⁷⁷ e.g. his precise involvement in or connection to the 'church' at Rome.

philosophical and contemplative ideal in the context of a small group of like-minded friends is apparent.

After a brief stay in Carthage, when travel from Italy back to Africa became possible in August of 388,⁷⁸ this circle of friends provided the nucleus for a religious community at Thagaste. Augustine's contemporary biographer Possidius summarized this two and a half year period at Thagaste as devoted to prayer, study, and discourse (*uita Aug.* 3). The exact nature of the community is unclear, but it incorporated aspects from both the classical tradition of philosophic *otium* (as Augustine continued as a Christian philosopher) and the Christian ascetic/monastic tradition with which Augustine was increasingly familiar. The focus on and pursuit of the religious spiritual life in the community is clear, however. Essentially, the period at Thagaste, especially the early years there, was one of communal settling, Christian consolidation, and broadening. This period also entailed personal loss for Augustine, whose son Adeodatus and close friend and correspondent Nebridius both died during this period. Yet, principally, it was one of consistent consolidation of his Christian thought and practice of life. Specific activities at Thagaste such as informal but circulated Christian teaching and exegesis as well as his life in religious community contributed to an emphasis on the Christian religion and the religious life it necessitated. In particular, his attention to Manichee attacks on the Old Testament and to Christian scripture led to his first work of exegesis *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans*. With this work, the influence of scripture in Augustine's life took a new turn as his deeper involvement with the biblical texts directly influenced and spurred his theological speculation. Also in this work, a refinement of Augustine's focus on spiritual incorporeal reality appears as he began to speak in terms of Christian 'spirituals' (who could comprehend this reality) and 'animals' or 'little ones' (who could not). For Augustine, the most important thing was to live a life in search of wisdom. To be sure, this was to take a Christian form, but he held this contemplative life to be superior to that of the ordinary Christian.⁷⁹ But Augustine's spiritual life at Thagaste not only comprised obviously Christian endeavors. He also finished a treatise on the liberal discipline of music, investigated language in *The Teacher* (a dialogue with his son Adeodatus), and his correspondence reveals a wide range of both addressees and topics. All these endeavors were pursued as a Christian and as part of the service of God.⁸⁰ Such activities and the focus on religion coalesced during Augustine's last year at Thagaste. Over the course of the period of considerable spiritual progress there, a clear increase in

⁷⁸ see O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 147; and G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 105-106.

⁷⁹ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 132.

⁸⁰ cf. *ep.* 5 from Nebridius.

Augustine's emphasis on 'religion' and the religious life is apparent, especially in 390 and 391.⁸¹ In 386, he had entered the church in faith intent on reaching understanding, and by 391, he had reached a first comprehensive Christian understanding under the rubric of 'true religion'. Among the most significant elements of this understanding were: the absorption of neo-Platonism under Christian religion and the presentation of Christian religion in terms of other religious groups and in terms of a position in history. In addition, although his writings give no evidence for direct ecclesial involvement, they do evidence an increasing familiarity with the institutions and structures of the church. Furthermore, they suggest a broader identification with the church's universal work. The most direct evidence at the end of the Thagaste period is Augustine's monastic direction, his decision to found a monastery. *On True Religion*, written during this final period, typifies the mixture at Thagaste of: scripture (employed throughout), ascetic emphasis, philosophical understanding, and above all Christian (true) religion.⁸² The combination of Augustine's understandings, writings, and actions in these areas meant that 'By 391 he had become a force in the intellectual life of Christian Africa'.⁸³

The end of the Thagaste period was dramatic. Augustine's growing reputation as a proponent and teacher of the Catholic Christian religion created the risk of being forced into episcopal office. This he studiously avoided (s. 355.2). However, in January/February 391, he came to Hippo Regius (which had a bishop) 'with the double object of seeking to found a monastery and to recruit for the monastic life a friend who was considering becoming a monk'.⁸⁴ But bishop Valerius, of Greek origin, needed a presbyter who could speak vigorously and well; and therefore, Augustine was forcibly ordained when the congregation brought him before the bishop and 'recommended' that he should fill the need. The elderly bishop so ordained Augustine, but he also furnished him with a garden monastery to pursue his monastic vocation while a priest.⁸⁵ This unsought and radical change in position forced Augustine into a very

⁸¹ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 123.

⁸² the introduction to *vera rel.* articulates a comparison between pagan philosophy, which had been unable to reach the masses with the truth, and Christianity which had communicated this very truth for which philosophy aims to the masses with great success (cf. J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (1991), 25).

⁸³ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534.

⁸⁴ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534; cf. s. 355.1f.; *uita Aug.* 3.

⁸⁵ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 535. Bonner notes that, 'it was his enforced ordination in 391 which has conferred immortality on the otherwise undistinguished port of Hippo, which brought Augustine into contact with ordinary African Christians, the uneducated and illiterate, upon whom he was to lavish so much care in later years' (*St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 3). Essentially, this surprise ordination 'afforded Augustine opportunity to devote himself to the service of others in a way that would have been inconceivable in the days when he was still a layman'.

different course of life.⁸⁶ Once he had entered the clergy, after a period of 'sabbatical' to study the scriptures in light of his new position and duties, he continued to write in more specific fashion against the Manichees and about the Catholic religion.

The enormous work that Augustine would undertake at Hippo as presbyter and then bishop can only be hinted at here.⁸⁷ In simple terms, however, from this point, Augustine's future development was dominated by clerical and monastic responsibilities, which accelerated and provided the framework for later thought,⁸⁸ and by his involvement in theological and ecclesiastical controversies. Of these controversies, those with the Manichees, Donatists, and Pelagians are the most noteworthy. In ecclesial terms, the most significant was the Donatist controversy, which Augustine was to enter fully within a couple years of his ordination.⁸⁹ His later writings, especially from this controversy, decisively expanded and consolidated Latin ecclesiology. In line with the significance of the scriptures throughout Augustine's 'early' years, his interaction with the Apostle Paul in the years following his ordination was quite possibly the greatest influence on his future development. Ultimately, the ecclesial side of his future development was among the most significant aspects in terms of its influence both in Augustine's day and throughout the history of Western Christianity.

Literature: The Church in the Young Augustine

Not surprisingly, in light of its considerable influence, the overall work of scholarship on Augustine's ecclesiology and its legacy is considerable.⁹⁰ Within this body of work, at least more recently, there are studies which concentrate on Augustine's understanding of the church in its general historical context (e.g. Markus, Evans),⁹¹ and those which are focused quite specifically on Augustine's ecclesiology (e.g.

⁸⁶ questions over the exact motivation for the trip to Hippo and whether the Hippo monastery was the first Augustine initiated remain, and are addressed in some detail at the end of the thesis. See G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 4; cf. G. Folliet, 'Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 25-44 (esp. 36-42); and G.P. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (1986); esp. 45-58.

⁸⁷ for his development after ordination, which lies beyond the scope of the thesis, see G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 536f.

⁸⁸ cf. F. Hoffmann, *Der Kirchenbegriff des hl. Augustinus in seinen Grundlagen und in seiner Entwicklung* (1933), 74-75; and G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 3, 4, 7-8.

⁸⁹ on the slight delay of his direct interaction with the Donatists, see G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 536.

⁹⁰ just one aspect has to do with the concepts expressed in Augustine's *magnum opus*: *De ciuitate dei*. Indeed, even works on works on Augustine's ecclesiology have been and continue to be written: see, most significantly, E. Lamirande, 'Une siècle et demi d'études sur l'ecclésiologie de saint Augustin', *REA* 8 (1962), 1-125; and, most recently, M.A. Fahey, 'Augustine's Ecclesiology Revisited', *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (1992), 173-182.

⁹¹ R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (21988); and R.F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (1972).

Lamirande⁹² and Borgomeo⁹³ – probably the two most significant and comprehensive such studies). Most work done on Augustine's ecclesiology has (rightly) tended to begin with the Donatist controversy and to focus on works like his *Enarrations on the Psalms*, *City of God*, etc.; that is, with Augustine of Hippo. The reasons for this are obvious. First, the Donatist controversy, which Augustine entered in the years immediately following ordination, focused on ecclesial issues, required specific thought and writing on these issues, and led to significant ecclesial comments and formulations. Second, as well as works from the Donatist controversy, other specific ecclesiastically focused work and speculation on the church itself come from the later clerical period (*i.e.* 392 and following) – the significance of Augustine's thought in later times primarily derives from his mature developments and articulations, especially in his *City of God*. And third, the clerical and monastic life of Hippo led to more direct ecclesiastical activity (*e.g.* catechism, preaching, etc.)⁹⁴ and thus increased attention in light of his congregation and monastic vocation.⁹⁵

The very existence of such a substantial and influential ecclesiology as Augustine's raises the question of what ideas it was based upon or grew out of. The question of Augustine's earliest ecclesiological conceptions or framework which formed the basis of his later ecclesiology must be raised. Whether Augustine came to Hippo, and indeed the Donatist controversy, with an ecclesiological 'blank slate' or not (and if not what ideas about the church were already present and in what form) needs to be addressed. Such analysis may reveal an early framework for future development and clarify the origin of some elements of his later theology. Even such focused studies as that of Oden⁹⁶ on images of the church in Augustine's sermons on the Psalms, which have shown the need for detailed attention to augment (and even balance) the general understanding of Augustine's ecclesiology achieved by scholars like Lamirande and Borgomeo, still, however, deal with the whole of Augustine's ecclesiology through a particular lens.

Thus, since this 'whole' ecclesiology principally began to take shape in the Donatist controversy, most studies begin from c. 392/393. This raises the issue of

⁹² E. Lamirande, *L'Église céleste selon saint Augustin* (1963).

⁹³ P. Borgomeo, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (1972). Fahey ('Augustine's Ecclesiology Revisited', *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (1992), 177) assigns Borgomeo's work 'the highest marks amid all those written on Augustine's ecclesiology in the last 40 years'. It is reviewed in much more detail by Lamirande in *Aug. Stud.* 5 (1974), 237-248.

⁹⁴ the episcopal framework for much of Augustine's legacy and development has been detailed principally by Van der Meer.

⁹⁵ *e.g.* in his sermons, the ecclesiological significance of which has been convincingly demonstrated by Borgomeo and Oden.

⁹⁶ A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (1990 Diss. Southern Methodist Univ.).

whether there is any ecclesial significance in Augustine's earlier development up to 391. A survey of the works concerning Augustine's ecclesiology from 1800 to 1950 reveals an absence of studies of ecclesial aspects in Augustine's pre-clerical thought.⁹⁷ The work earlier in this century of Hoffmann⁹⁸ is an exception and traces Augustine's ecclesiology in line with chronological development. However, while it begins with the early period, it proceeds with a view to his later ecclesiology. What is missing is a detailed analysis of Augustine's early understanding of the church in isolation from later developments.

Although work on Augustine's ecclesiology neglects the young Augustine, there is an abundance of work on Augustine's early period, especially relating to the *Confessions*. In general, however, these studies do not focus on the church because at first glance the connection to and importance of the church in this period is not clear. Although it is impossible to discuss the many comments in the literature which pertain to ecclesial aspects of Augustine's early or especially early Christian years here, two general points can be made about the literature. First, certain of Augustine's actions raise questions or hints of ecclesial connections and significance which have not received systematic and focused treatment, namely: his baptism; his Christian teaching, polemic, and exegesis as a Catholic; and finally, his eventual monastic vocational direction (especially as consciously opposed to a clerical direction). Such clear ecclesial aspects justify a treatment of the conception of the church in the young Christian Augustine. Second, the literature on this period (especially sections on the years 386 to 391) tends to fall into two general areas of focus: the philosophic and the monastic. Of the copious amount of work done on this seminal period of Augustine's life, most of it has been concerned primarily with the interesting relationship that existed between neo-Platonism and Christianity in the young Christian's mind (especially following the work of Courcelle).⁹⁹ Alternatively, and to a lesser extent, the literature has focused on Augustine's developing life of asceticism within monastic structures (e.g. Zumkeller, Lawless). Indeed, these two foci seem to constitute the two main schools of work treating the 'young Christian' Augustine in recent times. This is certainly understandable in light of the epochal work of scholars such as Courcelle and Verheijen and those who have followed upon their lines of inquiry and the issues they raised, and in light of the overarching controversy over the historicity and nature of the *Confessions*. Both emphases are well based and valid. Augustine was heavily influenced by neo-Platonism throughout his pre-clerical period (and after!), even if by

⁹⁷ E. Lamirande, 'Une siècle et demi d'études sur l'ecclésiologie de saint Augustin', *REA* 8 (1962), 1-125.

⁹⁸ F. Hoffmann, *Der Kirchenbegriff des hl. Augustinus* (1933).

⁹⁹ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1950, ²1968), etc.

390 it is clear that he had identified sufficient problems with neo-Platonism to consider it not only misguided but wrong when separate from Christianity. Yet, the massive emphasis on this period from a philosophical perspective has led to neglect of non-philosophic topics. In fact, it is possible to view the literature which focuses on the monastic/ascetic aspect of Augustine's development as developing in counterbalance to the emphasis on cultural input or philosophy.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Augustine *was* attracted to and pursued ascetic ideals (never divorced from community) from 386 onward. Yet, the meaning of 'monastic' in light of the work of Coyle¹⁰¹ is not so clear (especially in Augustine's case) in Italy or North Africa in the years 386-391. As a result, focus on his 'monasticism' in this period runs the danger of ignoring earlier breadth on account of later developments. Thus, scholarship on the young Augustine tends to speak of this time in terms primarily of philosophy and also monasticism/asceticism. Yet, the discussion of the period exclusively in these terms has focused too much on the one side or too narrowly on the other. One result has been a lack of scholarship on Augustine's ecclesiology in this time frame. Hence, it appears that treatment of the church in Augustine's early Christian development would help illuminate his overall development (*i.e.* open a window on neglected or missed aspects) and possibly provide one bridge in the gap between the monastic and especially philosophic emphases of studies on these years.¹⁰²

The Emergence of Augustine's Ecclesiology, 386-391

Studies of Augustine's ecclesiology do not tend to deal with his formative Christian period; conversely, studies of this formative period have not dealt with the church and have focused too specifically on Augustine's philosophical and 'monastic' development. This thesis considers Augustine's early ecclesiological formation, specifically, the emergence of Augustine's ideas of, relation to, and understanding of the church between his conversion in August 386 and his clerical consecration in early 391. The framing of this period in ecclesial terms is striking. In early 387, Augustine sealed his commitment to Catholic Christianity of 386 with baptism into the church. By early 391, he was ordained into the clergy. This thesis comes from a historical and not a theological perspective. It does not deal with Augustine's ecclesiology *per se* or aim

¹⁰⁰ cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 4 and 7-8.

¹⁰¹ J.K. Coyle, "'Monastic' Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*", *SP* 16 (1985), 497-500.

¹⁰² it is certainly possible to fill the gap here helpfully, as shown recently, for example by Harrison's sections on the importance of beauty and revelation to Augustine's early Christian thought: *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (1992) (her comprehensive study naturally also goes beyond the early period).

to add to the explanation of Augustine's mature ecclesiology. This study deals with the emergent forms and coalescence of ideas which might grow into later ecclesiology. It is not a study of ecclesiology pure and simple; rather, it focuses on the emergence of ecclesial ideas and an early ecclesiological understanding.¹⁰³ In terms of the literature, this provides a kind of historical preface to works on Augustine's ecclesiology proper (and it sets an early framework from which this mature ecclesiology grew). However, this study was also conceived as a means with which to better understand the pre-clerical Augustine on his own, independent of his later achievements and significance.¹⁰⁴

In essence, the issues of consideration are the following: what Augustine's first views of the church were and when they appeared; what his personal dependence on, commitment to, and role in the church was; what areas of understanding his ecclesial ideas gravitated around; what coalescence of these areas of understanding may be seen; what importance the church had in his understanding throughout this period; and finally, whether there is a coherent result (a synthesis of ecclesial understanding) in the period, *i.e.* the emergence of what could be called Augustine's early ecclesiology. This investigation of the possible emergence of Augustine's early ecclesiology in 386-391 will be examined in six stages:

1. the nature of Augustine's Christianity and his understanding of the church at Cassiciacum;
2. Augustine's activities and experience of the church during the time surrounding his baptism in Milan (specifically focusing on potential significance and issues);
3. the activities, ecclesial exposure, and Christian development – especially in ecclesial ideas – in the period of the journey between Milan and Thagaste (principally at Rome);
4. the probable significance and Christian influence of the time in Milan in light of the developments on the way back to North Africa;
5. the spiritual pursuits and ecclesial understandings of the early period at Thagaste; and
6. the state of Augustine's Christianity and understanding of the church in the later Thagaste period.

¹⁰³ I have not looked for the embryonic form of a later ecclesiology but for points of emergence (and some only surface briefly) which can be identified in 386-391; and any coherence in such aspects of emergence. The focus of the thesis is as much on the time period (*i.e.* using the ecclesial aspect as a window) as on ecclesiology.

¹⁰⁴ it is more restricted in scope and more from a historical slant than, for example, Hoffmann's theological study.

These stages allow points of emergence and development to be identified and significant themes to be traced. Finally, in the conclusion, the ecclesial understanding seen to emerge will be detailed and discussed in its historical and scholarly context.

The examination of the nature of Augustine's Christianity and understanding of the church at Cassiciacum principally entails an examination of the *Dialogues* and the life and thought at the villa which they reflect. The examination of the time in Milan focuses on the significant events and issues for Augustine there, especially surrounding baptism, and their potential ecclesial significance. Specifically, the nature of the evidence requires an indirect reconstruction of possible events and the Ambrosian contact in the period surrounding Augustine's baptism during his stay in 387. In the examination of the period at Rome and in general between departure from Milan (387) and arrival in Thagaste (388), particular attention will be given to the Christian views, especially of the church, that emerge during this time. Also, Augustine's Christian contacts and relations at Rome will be considered. Then, evaluation of the early foci of Augustine's Christian attention and the importance he assigned to different aspects of Christianity will be made. This discussion is based primarily on *The Greatness of the Soul* and on the sections of *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* from Rome. The examination of the time in Rome further justifies a re-examination of the time in Milan. In this, the probable influence and significance of the events experienced and the Ambrosian contact for Augustine's early view of the church are reconstructed with special attention on Ambrose's sermons and baptismal discourses. The examination of the early period at Thagaste focuses on the first three works completed there, namely, the African sections of *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, *On the Morals of the Manichaeans*, and *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans*. Particular attention is given to Augustine's actual and conceptual settlement¹⁰⁵ at Thagaste, both in the potential processing of significant ecclesial elements (those previously stimulated and those raised by new endeavors) and in the establishment of a sort of religious community there. In light of this last consideration and the general evaluation of Thagaste, the issue of the nature of the Thagaste community is addressed in an *excursus*. The examination of the later Thagaste period focuses on works from the end of the period, in particular *On Music* and *On True Religion*. By considering these works, with their more sophisticated discussions on religion and the religious life, a possible resultant synthesis of Augustine's understanding of Christian religion is elucidated with

¹⁰⁵ the discussion of Thagaste attempts to avoid treating the period as a uniform whole, which it certainly is not. Also, since the nature of the Thagaste community (and daily life in general after Rome) is vague, labels like 'monastic' or 'classical philosophic retirement' have not been used to describe the community.

particular focus on the ecclesial elements of this synthesis. Additionally, in view of this examination, the dramatic events – especially the trip to Hippo – which ended Augustine's stay at Thagaste are evaluated. In the conclusion, the ecclesial understanding seen to emerge is placed in its context in more detailed and fluent expression. Particular attention is given to the immediate forward developments and to the significance of the ecclesial understanding to the general understanding of Augustine in the years up to 391.

Methodological Considerations

Since this is a study of emergence, not, primarily, of ecclesiology, it aims to trace the lines of Augustine's understanding of the church and the emergence of this understanding, not to explicate an achieved doctrinal position. On account of its developmental focus, the chronological method has been the most significant determinant in the way in which this thesis was done.¹⁰⁶ In particular, it has determined the order of investigation. In general, Augustine's works from this period have been broken down into chronological sequence and from this sequence organized into five groups: 386-early 387 at Cassiciacum; 387 at Milan; 387/388 at Rome; 388-389 at Thagaste; and 390-early 391 at Thagaste. Within each of these groupings, an effort has been made to show developments from earlier to later. Naturally, this method hinges on the chronological sequence and particular dating of the works considered. Though a number of particular chronological uncertainties surround several of the works from this period,¹⁰⁷ the basic chronology of Augustine's works is well known; he himself having given a chronological outline in his *Review*. Thus, it is possible to create a reliable overall sequence which is facilitated by the fact that during this period Augustine lived and wrote for distinct periods in four different locations. This sequence is sufficiently certain to identify clear stages in his development. In addition to the direct chronological information and ordering of Augustine's works and travels, points of significant emergence or development of thought have also been chronologically identified (more generally) by consideration of trends in his use of particular terms and passages of scripture.

¹⁰⁶ R.A. Markus, *Saeculum* (21988), viii, writes: 'the harvest of studies of every facet of his life, work and thought [yielded by the anniversary of 386/387] ... together with much of the best work done in every field of Augustinian studies in the last [20] years, have brought home more powerfully than ever the necessity of considering Augustine's views chronologically, in their widest possible intellectual and historical context'. I have followed in this emphasis on chronology if not, due to limitations of scope, on the 'wider context' of the emergence and development of Augustine's thought on the church in 386-391.

¹⁰⁷ which are taken up in the thesis and in Appendix A.

Several specific chronological assumptions have been made in the thesis. The first and seemingly most obvious is the treatment of 386-391 as a 'Christian' period in Augustine's development. In connection with debates over the apparent differences between the Augustine of the *Confessions* and of the *Dialogues*, this stance has been questioned at times. This debate and others surrounding the *Confessions* have not been dealt with in more than summary detail in the thesis, but an examination of the texts confirm that the period is Christian, even though the development in Augustine's Christianity from 386 to 391 is considerable. Second, it has been assumed that August 386 was a valid starting place for this thesis. As indicated, Augustine's childhood experience of the church, or even his more serious direct contact in Milan in 384-386, do not seem to have contributed to or to have stimulated thought on the church as such. Additionally, the years spent with the Manichees did not instigate consideration of the nature of religious community or the advocacy of Manichaeism in terms of its ecclesial elements; rather, the focus was on its rational aspects. Thus, the first action which implies even a basic consideration of the church theologically was Augustine's decision for baptism. This decision took place at Cassiciacum following Augustine's conversion, and thus it is with Cassiciacum that this thesis begins. Finally, since the Thagaste period was certainly not a monolithic whole, it has been approached chronologically. In this, it has been assumed that the works from Thagaste can be split into early and later sections.¹⁰⁸

Besides adopting a chronological method of analysis, the second principal methodological focus with which this thesis is undertaken is textual. The majority of this thesis is concerned with examining Augustine's writings.¹⁰⁹ Certainly, a sufficient number of writings and sufficient chronological spread within the period exists on which to base a developmental study. Because of the chronological method followed, the primary sources have been treated in two levels. When considering a particular period, first-level importance has been given to texts that were written during that period and where possible the relevant information from such texts forms the basis for examination. Second-level importance has been given to primary texts that comment on a period retrospectively (*e.g.* the *Confessions* on this period generally, or later sections

¹⁰⁸ see the beginnings of ch. 4 and 5 as well as Appendix A for discussion of the dating issues involved.

¹⁰⁹ little time will be devoted to the general history and culture of the day, except as these illustrate Augustine's particular course of life. It is also worth noting briefly that throughout the thesis words such as 'church', 'ecclesial', 'ecclesiological', etc. have been employed and normal breadth of usage has certainly been required of them. Nevertheless, it is noted here that 'ecclesiastical' has been used with a fairly narrow sense of pertaining to the structures and specific institutions of the church; 'ecclesial' has been used as the most embracing term for 'things that have to do with the church'; and 'ecclesiology' or 'ecclesiological' often have been employed as much as 'understanding' of the church as 'doctrine' or 'study' of the church.

of *mor. ecc.* recording observations about the period at Rome). Information from the second-level primary sources is not inferior, but simply has been given a qualified level of significance in order to avoid reading later emphases into earlier works and to keep the distinctions between periods as clear as is possible. In a number of cases, the complete lack of primary evidence has necessitated reconstructions from more general historical sources roughly contemporary with Augustine.

Such discussion raises the issue of the genre and topics of the works considered. Augustine wrote on a wide variety of topics and in a number of styles (*e.g.* polemical, dialogical, etc.) during the period 386 to 391. From a historical and ecclesial perspective, some contain very little valuable information. A particular problem has been the lack at Rome and Thagaste, following *The Greatness of the Soul*, of information about Augustine's community context or daily life. This has meant that definitive positions on the nature of his community (at Thagaste, for example) and daily routine have not been advanced after the Cassiciacum period, even though indirect reconstructions have certainly been argued. Such indirect reconstructions have been necessary at several points due to the dearth of direct evidence. However, valid examination can take place in such cases first by reconstructing events which probably happened or aspects which were probably encountered and then, from indications of the significance of such events and aspects,¹¹⁰ by reconstruction of probable influence.

The last particular method of approach in this thesis has been to proceed in terms of Augustine's integrated personal development.¹¹¹ That is, since he does not give systematic expression to his understanding of the church during this time, this study has discussed his view of and relation to the church in line with his personal, spiritual (*i.e.* intellectual and religious) development. Where ecclesial elements are found they are highlighted in the basic line of development (*e.g.* ascetic, instructional, incorporeal spirituality), though the considerable interest, discussions, and importance of these areas in their own right have had to be left with only summary statements. Where possible, particular emphasis has been given to the way in which Augustine's understanding of the church related both to his practical and communal activities (both local and general) and daily life as well as to his more intellectual, philosophical, or theological development. In evaluating influences on Augustine's development, weight has been given more to his own power of synthesis and his own intentions and observations than to concerted investigation for possible sources of stimulation. In

¹¹⁰ such as the emergence of a new perspective following a particular period or place of activity.

¹¹¹ G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 8, notes that, 'The interrelation between Augustine's life and thought seems to me to be one of the crucial elements in contemporary Augustinian studies. Augustine is not a theological systematizer. ... In trying to understand him, we have constantly to relate what he says to the time and circumstance in which he was writing'.

general, it has been assumed that Augustine's development was not *based* on input but *stimulated* by input. He seems at almost every turn to be sensitive to external influences and ideas but to remain fixed to his own progress and assimilation of what he encountered. For, during the period at least of 386 to 391, these things all together constituted to Augustine the spiritual life to which he had committed himself to in August 386.

CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHURCH IN THE CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 386, Augustine left his position as professor of rhetoric in Milan on account of his health, his conversion to Christianity, and his related desire to pursue a philosophic life.¹ He went with his family, several friends, and two of his pupils to a villa at Cassiciacum² belonging to Verecundus, a grammarian friendly to Augustine.³ There, the group spent its days in philosophic and religious contemplation, discussing philosophy, and working on the farm. Augustine also continued the instruction of two of his pupils (Trygetius and Licentius)⁴ in the liberal arts. The philosophical discussions at the villa arose out of both organized⁵ and unorganized⁶ contexts, and some of them became the basis for Augustine's first extant writings, *i.e.* the first works he wrote after his conversion to Christianity. All four of these primarily philosophical works, referred to as the *Cassiciacum Dialogues*,⁷ take a dialogue form, and all four

¹ *Acad.* 1.1.4; *conf.* 9.3.5-9.4.12.

² the location of Cassiciacum has been debated, but G.J.P. O'Daly in the 'Cassiciacum' article of the *Augustinus-Lexikon* (v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 771-781), after surveying past discussions (772-774), convincingly concludes that the most likely location is 'Cassago' (*i.e.* modern Cassago Brianza, 'about 35 km north-east of Milan' – he is supported by J. Doignon, 53 (see source below)). For information on the stay at Cassiciacum generally (including discussion of the debate surrounding the dates of composition of the various *Dialogues*, 778-779), see O'Daly's article and excellent bibliography in full; O. Perler (with J.-L. Maier), *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 179-196; and the thorough article by J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung, Cassiciacum* 39 (1989), 47-86 (esp. his breakdown and summary of the *Dialogues* in terms of their 'trois sujets essentiels', 59f.). Peter Brown's chapter, 'Christianae Vitae Otium: Cassiciacum' in *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (1967), 115-127, is also illuminating.

³ *conf.* 9.3.5; see ch. 3, p. 66-67 and n. 12 for brief comments on Verecundus' relationship with Augustine (and his circle).

⁴ Trygetius was a relative of Romanianus (Augustine's friend and sometimes patron, *e.g.* *Acad.* 2.2.3) and Licentius was his son (*ord.* 1.2.5, *cf.* 1.6.16).

⁵ such as described in *beata u.*, when all the Cassiciacum residents gathered to hold a disputation in the baths on the occasion of Augustine's birthday.

⁶ such as in *ord.* 1.3.6, where we read of a night-time discussion occasioned by a chance awakening of Augustine, Trygetius, and Licentius.

⁷ *Contra Academicos* (*Against the Academics*, *cf. retr.* 1.1.1); *De beata uita* (*On the Happy Life*, *cf. retr.* 1.1.2); *De ordine* (*On Order*, *cf. retr.* 1.1.3); and *Soliloquia* (*Soliloquies*, *cf. retr.* 1.1.4). Corresponding entries in the *Augustinus-Lexikon* have already appeared for 'Beata uita (De-)': v. 1,

were intended for publication.⁸ *Against the Academics*, the first of the works begun, dealt with the certainty of knowledge and the roles which authority and reason play in attaining it.⁹ *On the Happy Life* attempted to define the *beata uita* and to describe the way to attain it.¹⁰ *On Order* discussed the apparently ordered structure of creation and considered how evil should be understood in such a universe.¹¹ Finally, in the *Soliloquies* (a term which he coined),¹² Augustine interacted with Reason¹³ to establish his understanding of God and the soul, the 'twofold question' to which 'true philosophy' pertains.¹⁴

The *Dialogues* have come under considerable scrutiny in this century over their literary structure, historical value, and implications for understanding Augustine's early beliefs. A full discussion of the issues involved is beyond the scope of this thesis,¹⁵ but it is necessary to state briefly the position adopted on these issues here.¹⁶ At the

fasc. 4 (1990), 618-624, by J. Doignon; and (using a somewhat surprising form of the title) 'Academicis (De-)': v. 1, fasc. 1/2 (1986), 45-51, by B.R. Voss.

⁸ J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 192-193, who also notes that the *Dialogues* were 'modeled mainly on Cicero'; see also G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 774-779 (esp. 775).

⁹ for a good summary of the very considerable literature on *Acad.* and the work's various ideas see J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 59-63. See also J.J. O'Meara's introduction and notes in *St. Augustine: Against the Academics*, ACW 12 (1951).

¹⁰ this is certainly the focus of the treatise; but for its other themes, see J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 63-66.

¹¹ for a summary of the literature on *ord.* and of its themes, see J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 67-72, 82.

¹² *sol.* 1.1.1; 2.1.1; cf. 2.7.14; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 123.

¹³ which is personified and acts as the second interlocutor in this 'dialogue'.

¹⁴ *ord.* 2.18.47; *sol.* 1.2.7; cf. *Acad.* 3.19.42.

¹⁵ see J.J. O'Meara, 'Augustine and Neoplatonism', in *Rech. Aug.* 1 (1958), 91-111, for a summary of the issues, as well as his book, *The Young Augustine* (1954), ch. 12 and epilogue, and his introduction to *Against the Academics*, ACW 12 (1951). More recently, see G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin: Etat d'une question centenaire (depuis Harnack et Boissier, 1888)', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 9-25 (with special reference to any contrast between the Augustine 'du christianisme et de la philosophie', 10-16f.); the incisive comments of J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions* v. 3 (1992), esp. 86-88; and G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 777-779 (who succinctly states that 'it is more likely that the dialogues are based on real conversations which have been adapted to a stylized traditional form', 777. 'More important than the question of their historicity is that of the literary and ideological function of works written in this particular form', 775), for more comprehensive statement of the approximate position adopted in this paper.

¹⁶ I do not feel that these assumptions affect the conclusions of this chapter very much (since I will not be basing many arguments on the 'historical' events described as such, but rather on the interests and possibilities at Cassiciacum which they indicate) save that – in line with what appears to be the current consensus *contra* the theses of Harnack, Alfarić, *et al.* – I am convinced that Augustine had submitted his physical, spiritual, and mental life, in principle, to the authority of Christianity by the time when the *Dialogues* were composed; cf. G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 21.

end of the last century and beginning of this one, several scholars¹⁷ began to question the traditional account of Augustine's early 'Christian' life¹⁸ (an account which had been dominated by Augustine's own rendering of this period in his *Confessions*)¹⁹ in light of the supposedly different, 'philosophic' Augustine revealed in writings from this period, notably the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*. Essentially, the debate came to entail two issues:

1. the historicity of the *Dialogues*, i.e. the extent to which they should be considered to record or indicate actual events;²⁰ and
2. whether the nature of Augustine's thought in the *Dialogues* contradicts the tenor of his thought described in the *Confessions* and traditionally ascribed by Augustinian scholars to this early period, and thus the *Confessions*' historicity.

J.J. O'Meara seems correct to assert that the fundamental nature of the *Dialogues* is literary and not historical.²¹ However, this does not mean that the works do not reflect (or indeed record) actual discussions (in whole or in part).²² In short, frequent discussion of philosophical topics was almost surely a regular occurrence at Cassiciacum; and Augustine, employing various levels of editorial skill,²³ used the

¹⁷ such as P. Alfarić, L. Gourdon, and A. Harnack. See J.J. O'Meara, *ACW* 12 (1951), 19-20, for a brief statement of their views, as well as G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), *passim*.

¹⁸ roughly speaking, up to the point at which he became bishop at Hippo, but with the focus of attention on the years in Italy, 384-388.

¹⁹ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (21968), 7. On this domination generally, see his opening section on 'Un demi-siècle de controverses, autour des *Confessions* et des *Dialogues*', 7-12.

²⁰ see J. Doignon's review of the discussion over historicity ('Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 53-55) in which he lists the problems that confront a view of the *Dialogues* as 'records' of Cassiciacum discussions, but generally supports their historical credibility. See also, G. Madec, 'L'historicité des *Dialogues* de Cassiciacum', *REA* 32 (1986), 207-231, and C. Starnes, *Augustine's Conversion* (1990), 277f.

²¹ J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 192-193.

²² i.e. does not imply that their historicity is undermined; see G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 777-778.

²³ it seems that Augustine's comment in *Acad.* 2.4.10 that 'after our earlier discussion which we condensed into the first book' (italics mine, *Post pristinum sermonem, quem in primum librum contulimus, septem fere diebus a disputando fuimus otiosi ... tractaremus*, CCL 29. 23) must indicate that he was at least amending/abridging the records which were taken at the disputations. The comment that Augustine is sending Romanianus a 'written version' (*disputationem ... relatam in litteras tibi misi*, CCL 29. 5) in *Acad.* 1.1.4, after having arranged for a scribe to record the disputation regarding the Academics (*Adhibito itaque notario, ne aurae laborem nostrum discerperent, nihil perire permisi*) is ambiguous in this connection (and it is uncertain whether this action should be considered to have happened or as part of a literary convention). See also G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534. Latin citations of the *Dialogues* are taken from the texts in the CCL (v. 29 (1970), for *Acad.*, *beata u.*, and *ord.*), and the CSEL (v. 89 (1981), for *sol.*) and will be listed with appropriate page reference as above. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in the thesis from the Latin are my own, with the exception of excerpts from the *Confessions*, which are taken from H. Chadwick's recent translation, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), occasionally modified.

records from several of these discussions as the basis for the first three Cassiciacum works.²⁴ It is not possible to be completely certain about the various historical events described in the *Dialogues*,²⁵ but many of them almost certainly correspond to actual occurrences. Those that do not correspond still probably reflect aspects of daily life at the villa accurately.²⁶

Furthermore, it does not seem that the *Dialogues* contradict the *Confessions* (on the whole, they reinforce them), but they do modify or 'fill in' our understanding of specific aspects of Augustine's life and thought immediately following his conversion, sometimes significantly. From these early writings, it becomes clear that Augustine was pursuing 'true philosophy'²⁷ from the basis of belief in some fundamental Christian doctrines (*i.e.* monotheism and incarnation). As he stated in *Against the Academics*,

I think that [by this point in history] one system of really true philosophy has been filtered out. For that philosophy is not of this world – which [kind of worldly philosophy]²⁸ is detested most deservedly²⁹ by our sacred mysteries³⁰ – but of another intelligible world. To which even the most subtle reasoning could never call back souls which have been blinded by the manifold darkness of error and have been stained by the most filthy body, unless the most high God, out of his mercy, had bent and submitted the authority of the divine intellect [*i.e.* Christ, see *Acad.* 2.1.1] to that same human body. Not only by his precepts but also by his deeds, souls have been awakened to return into themselves and even are able to return to their homeland without intense reasonings (*Acad.* 3.19.42).³¹

²⁴ the *Soliloquia* entail a dialogue between Augustine and himself, or Reason, as he records in *retr.* 1.4.1-4, and were written after the other Cassiciacum works, during the winter of 386/387.

²⁵ such as the exact dates of their composition between August 386 and February 387. See G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 778; and Appendix A on chronology, p. 271 and Table 7, below.

²⁶ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 87.

²⁷ *Acad.* 3.17.38; 3.19.42; *cf. ord.* 1.11.32. It is crucial to understand that in the world of Antiquity, philosophy was hardly just a thought construct aimed to understand or reconcile various areas of knowledge and experiences of life. It was a lifestyle – a thought construct which was to work itself out in one's daily life. In contrast with the practice of philosophy today, it encompassed the adoption of a lifestyle which reflected one's philosophy; theory and practice were not separate.

²⁸ the 'detested' philosophy referred to here probably includes Manichaean materialism as well as the skepticism of the New Academy.

²⁹ this comment might reflect a tension at Milan with some Christians who detested the philosophy of neo-Platonism but not 'rightly' so in Augustine's opinion. His references to Christians whom he encountered during this period that were not able to appreciate or understand neo-Platonic ideas (or appreciate the liberal arts, see *e.g. ord.* 2.9.26 and below) make this a possible scenario.

³⁰ Augustine uses this phrase (*sacra nostra*) a number of times in the *Dialogues* (as well as *mysterium*) with a meaning broader than but including scripture (see Appendix B on terminology, p. 302-303). See also J. Doignon's section discussing 'Dieu et «nos mystères»' (*Acad.* 3.42) ('Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 72f.).

³¹ *sed tamen eliquata est, ut opinor, una uerissimae philosophiae disciplina. Non enim est ista huius mundi philosophia, quam sacra nostra meritissime detestantur, sed alterius intellegibilis, cui animas multiformibus erroris tenebris caecatas et altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitae numquam ista ratio subtilissima reuocaret, nisi summus deus populari quadam clementia diuini intellectus auctoritatem usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret atque summitteret, cuius non solum praeceptis sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semet ipsas et resipiscere patriam etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent.* CCL 29. 61.

Augustine saw no distinction between pursuing the philosophic life and pursuing a life pleasing to God, or between seeking 'knowledge of God and the soul' and seeking wisdom and truth. Such pursuing and seeking were both necessary in order to obtain the *beata uita* successfully.³² Augustine himself makes it very clear in the *Dialogues* that the pursuit of God and the soul constitute the primary objective of philosophy.³³ This objective, while philosophical (*i.e.* sought by reason), is nonetheless based on Christian authority and flows out from a religious framework:

I have fixed in my mind to depart on absolutely no occasion from the authority of Christ; for I perceive none stronger. But, concerning that which has to be sought by the most subtle reasoning – for I have this on my mind, since I am impatient in my desire to grasp truth not only by belief but also by understanding – I am confident that I will find this understanding with the Platonists, and it will not be opposed to our sacred mysteries (*Acad.* 3.20.43).³⁴

Augustine's philosophical preoccupation is obvious here (*i.e.* with what is 'sought out by subtle reasoning'). Yet, this preoccupation remained set within the parameters of the 'authority of Christ' and served the function of 'understanding' what had been taken by faith. Importantly, the expectation and criterion for reasoning with the philosophy of the 'Platonists' was that this vehicle for 'understanding' would not be at variance with the sacred truth of Christ to which he had submitted.

One example of how research on the relationship between the *Dialogues* and the *Confessions* has modified scholarly understanding of Augustine's early Christian life was the discovery and recognition, by Courcelle and others, of neo-Platonic Christians at Milan in the later decades of the fourth century.³⁵ Madec summarizes Courcelle's insight into the 'milieu culturel milanais', saying,

L'étude précise des rapports intellectuels qu'Augustin a entretenus avec Ambroise, Mallius Theodorus et Simplicianus amenait alors P. Courcelle à considérer que la conversion d'Augustin s'est faite dans «un milieu chrétien imprégné de néoplatonisme».³⁶ Enfin, du fait que Simplicianus était le maître d'Ambroise, après avoir été l'ami de Marius Victorinus, P. Courcelle concluait à l'existence d'une tradition de synthèse de néoplatonisme chrétien: «Néoplatonisme et christianisme sont intimement liées, pour les têtes pensantes de l'Eglise milanaise, et non opposés comme ont cru les modernes. Cette formule de synthèse, élaborée déjà, est celle à laquelle

³² more detailed discussion of Augustine's integration of neo-Platonism and Christianity will follow in ch. 2 and 3.

³³ see n. 14.

³⁴ *Mihi ergo certum est nusquam prorsus a Christi auctoritate discedere; non enim reperio ualentiorum. Quod autem subtilissima ratione persequendum est – ita enim iam sum affectus, ut quid sit uerum non credendo solum sed etiam intellegendo apprehendere impatienter desiderem – apud Platonicos me interim, quod sacris nostris non repugnet, reperturum esse confido.* CCL 29. 61; cf. similar sentiments in *ord.* 1.11.32.

³⁵ e.g. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), ch. 3: 'La découverte du néoplatonisme chrétien', 93-138, and *passim* (for the absorption of this milieu by Augustine see p. 139-174).

³⁶ citing P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité* (1963), 31.

Augustin a donné son entière adhésion. L'origine de cette synthèse remarquable paraît bien remonter à Marius Victorinus, dont Simplicien, catéchiste d'Ambroise avait été le familier».³⁷

Thus, Augustine's introduction to Milanese Christianity and neo-Platonism were related; both were apparently 'linked' in the cultural milieu of the capital. Madec also notes that Courcelle's outline of Christian and neo-Platonic connections at Milan has been accepted even if some of his details remain debatable.³⁸

The important question here is what contribution the *Dialogues* make to the understanding of Augustine's view of the church during his earliest Christian days. Since he made no direct mention of the church in the *Dialogues*,³⁹ these writings must be investigated for indirect answers to questions like: what did he think the church taught?; what had he learned about the church and from whom?; and what role did the church play in his understanding of living the Christian life, in the phrase prevalent at Cassiciacum, the *beata uita*? Thus, the observations of this chapter will be based primarily on the texts written at Cassiciacum and only secondarily on supporting or additional suggestions from the *Confessions*.⁴⁰ The first examination will be of the context of the *Dialogues* as revealed by the works themselves. Next, those texts which bear upon Augustine's conception of Christian religion (and its connection to philosophy), the church, and the Christian community will be considered. Finally, conclusions will be drawn, and specific elements from the discussion which may be significant for future attention will be highlighted.

The results of this progression will include confirmation of Augustine's Christian character (and that of the retreat generally) at Cassiciacum; clarification that Augustine had read, and was engaged at Cassiciacum in reading, Christian scriptures and some other Christian writings; and clarification that those items or persons referred to in the *Dialogues* which may provide links to the church (notably Ambrose) were considered in as much as they were connected to the authority of Christ. Augustine held this authority to be the necessary companion of reason in the pursuit of true philosophy. Finally, it will be clear that Augustine considered religious practice important and that his ideas of community may explain the minimalist picture of the church that emerges from Cassiciacum.

³⁷ citing P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 252-253.

³⁸ 'Cette présentation que donne P. Courcelle de l'environnement culturel dans lequel s'est faite la conversion intellectuelle d'Augustin n'a guère été contestée, contrairement à son interprétation de la scène du jardin de Milan. A. Solignac a même élargi le «milieu» en un «cercle milanais», G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 17 (with reference to A. Solignac, 'Introduction et notes complémentaires aux Confessions', *BA* 13 (1962), 529-536).

³⁹ the term '*ecclesia*', for example, is not found until the writings at Rome in 387/388 (see ch. 3).

⁴⁰ given the paucity of information about Cassiciacum in the *Confessions*, there is not much to this distinction in this period of Augustine's life.

CONTEXT: THE OCCASION OF THE RETREAT

As indicated above, Augustine's retreat to Cassiciacum was occasioned by a number of factors which encouraged his desire to leave his professional life in Milan. He had come from Rome as professor of rhetoric to the capital city (*i.e.* the residence of the imperial court) in 384 and went through a stressful time following his arrival.⁴¹ Physically, he was overworked trying to gain a following as a teacher of rhetoric successfully,⁴² was in ill health,⁴³ and had expended the considerable effort required to gain friends and secure patronage at court in order to provide for his future ambitions and present dependents.⁴⁴ Emotionally, he had been forced, by his mother and by cultural norms, to separate from his concubine of thirteen years – a painful experience which left a deep scar still quite tender when he wrote the *Confessions* ten years later.⁴⁵ Mentally and spiritually, he had renounced his final affiliations with the Manichees⁴⁶ and then had tried to escape the skepticism of the Academic philosophy into which he had slipped as he moved away from Manichaeism.⁴⁷ In his struggle to find spiritual grounding, Augustine then 'decided for the time being to be a catechumen in the Catholic church which the precedent of my parents⁴⁸ recommended to me until some clear light should come by which I could direct my course' (*conf.* 5.14.25).⁴⁹ As he remained in the Catholic congregation and interacted more broadly at Milan, he reconciled himself to a new understanding of the spiritual side of the universe as commended to him by the neo-Platonism of some '*libri Platoniorum*' and the discourses of Ambrose.⁵⁰ He had received the 'Platonic books' from some member

⁴¹ H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xix; J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 191-192.

⁴² *Acad.* 1.1.4; *conf.* 9.2.4; something which had also been a problem, for various reasons, in Carthage (*conf.* 5.8.14, *cf. conf.* 3.3.6) and Rome (*conf.* 5.12.22).

⁴³ esp. chest and breathing difficulty; *Acad.* 1.1.3; *beata u.* 1.4; *conf.* 9.2.4; 9.5.13. He continued to feel the effects of his ailments at Cassiciacum; *cf. Acad.* 3.7.15 and *ord.* 1.11.33. See *conf.* 9.2.4 for the origin of the health failure.

⁴⁴ *conf.* 6.9.3; 6.13.23-6.14.24; 8.5.10; *cf.* P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 69-72, 81, 88-90, and 116.

⁴⁵ *conf.* 6.15.25; *cf.* P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 88-89; and G. Bonner's balanced comments in *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (21986), 78-79.

⁴⁶ a process which began in Carthage when Augustine's questions could not be answered by Faustus (*conf.* 5.6.11) but was gradual (*cf. conf.* 5.9.18; 5.12.22; 5.13.23). Residual attachments were still present early at Milan; J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1991), 321 (in commentary on '*utrique nesciebamus*').

⁴⁷ *beata u.* 1.4; *conf.* 5.10.19; 5.14.25; *cf.* H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxi.

⁴⁸ see also *Acad.* 2.2.3.

⁴⁹ *statui ergo tamdiu esse catechumenus in catholica ecclesia mihi a parentibus commendata, donec aliquid certi eluceret quo cursum dirigerem.* References are to the Latin text of the *Confessions* from both O'Donnell (1992; here from v. 1. 157) and Verheijen (1981; CCL 27, here 72) since O'Donnell's more recent and slightly amended edition (used here for basic text) lacks critical apparatus. Augustine's catechetical experience is taken up in ch. 2. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 72-74, provides a compact summary of Augustine's progression at Milan.

⁵⁰ H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxi. For the discussion of the circle at Milan, see P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 136-138, 200-210, and *passim*; where, among

(probably Theodorus) of the circle of neo-Platonist Christians at Milan,⁵¹ the most significant of whom for Augustine was Simplicianus.⁵² Finally, he gave himself over to Christianity, intellectually and morally, as the only way to secure the necessary righteousness needed for the ascent of his soul to God and the philosophic life which he now thought that, as a Christian, he ought to lead.⁵³ This whole progression at Milan before the retreat at Cassiciacum is indicated by, or is at least consistent with, the information in the *Dialogues*. It is certainly found in the *Confessions*.

Life at the Villa

Our knowledge of the situation at Verecundus' villa, however, is almost entirely dependent on the *Dialogues* themselves.⁵⁴ Despite the somewhat technical nature of these works, a fairly comprehensive picture of the life of the Cassiciacum residents emerges. In addition to Augustine, Trygetius, and Licentius (ever present participants in the discussions), Alypius (Augustine's closest friend), Monnica, Navigius (probably Augustine's older brother), Lartidianus and Rusticus (cousins who may or may not have been present for the whole time), and his son, Adeodatus, were present.⁵⁵ The residents ate communally and regularly took part in the normal work of the farm.⁵⁶ Tutoring continued for the two pupils, with regular reading of a half book of Virgil.⁵⁷ On one occasion, a seven-day suspension interrupted discussion while the students

other things, he argues that Augustine heard the sermons *De Isaac uel anima* and *De bono mortis* (p. 124f.) and highlights Augustine's interaction with Manlius Theodorus and Simplicianus (p. 153-187). G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), agrees with the general view of the intellectual/cultural milieu in which Augustine was converted put forward by Courcelle (Madec, 17) but gives a helpful warning against too glib an adoption (or acceptance) of a straight 'synthesis' of neo-Platonism and Christianity, 'la notion de synthèse intellectuelle, qui assimile l'activité de pensée à une alchimie conceptuelle, à un laborieux dosage' (p. 19-20). The influence of time spent under Ambrose's preaching (esp. later before baptism in 387) is addressed below in ch. 2 and 3.

⁵¹ cf. *beata u.* 1.4, but note *conf.* 7.9.13 and Chadwick's comment on this (*Confessions* (1991), 121 n. 13).

⁵² P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 168f; cf. also ch. 2, p. 33f., below.

⁵³ cf. *Acad.* 1.1.1; 1.3.9; 2.3.8; *conf.* 7.3.5; 8.7.16-18; 8.8.19; 8.11.27; 9.2.4.

⁵⁴ the *Confessions*' account of the time at Cassiciacum (*conf.* 9.4.7-9.6.14) records only a few actual events (such as the miraculous healing of a toothache which Augustine had (9.4.12), or the fact that there were disputations (9.4.7)).

⁵⁵ except for the possible absence (which I would affirm, cf. G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 778) of Alypius and Navigius, who seem to have gone to Milan for several days during the period when the dialogues were taking place. See J.J. O'Meara, *ACW* 12 (1951), 28-30, for a critique of the authenticity of this occurrence as well as his brief biographical sketches of a number of the interlocutors (p. 11-14). See also the article on 'Alypius' by E. Feldmann, A. Schindler, O. Wermelinger, in *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 1/2 (1986), 245-267.

⁵⁶ *Acad.* 1.5.15; and J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 192.

⁵⁷ *ord.* 1.26; *Acad.* 2.4.10. See G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 776, for activities.

read the Aeneid.⁵⁸ Still, philosophic discussion seems to have been mandatory and regular for the pupils, but only occasional for the other residents.

The religious character of the daily lives of the residents at Cassiciacum is also quite clear. For example, on several occasions, Licentius is described either in prayer of petition or praise, or singing the tune of a psalm.⁵⁹ Monnica also recites a hymn on one occasion.⁶⁰ Augustine himself is described as praying regularly, pouring out lament or praise before God, or engaging in the study of scripture.⁶¹ The primary focus of the Cassiciacum writings is philosophical, but the religious elements observed in these writings should be viewed as a naturally strong aspect of the philosophical life being pursued by Augustine.

The kind of 'true philosophy' which Augustine pursued is indicated in the prologue to the first work begun at Cassiciacum, *Against the Academics*. He dedicated this treatise to Romanianus, a friend who supported Augustine's schooling after his father Patricius died and who was clearly fond of and greatly influenced by Augustine.⁶² Augustine's patron had come to Milan in connection with a legal suit, and the two interacted frequently there.⁶³ In his introduction, Augustine invited Romanianus to abandon the pursuits of this world and to join him in the 'lap of philosophy'.⁶⁴ This philosophy will teach Romanianus that 'nothing whatever is to be worshipped that is attested by any [physical] senses, ... but should be scorned', and will 'make clearly visible the most true and hidden God' (*Acad.* 1.1.3).⁶⁵ Augustine

⁵⁸ *Acad.* 2.4.10. What is not observed at Cassiciacum (or for that matter during the period 386-387) is Augustine making a sharp or total break from his rhetorical profession or professional academic interests. Rather, there is a more fluid transition from a teacher harassed in one context to a teacher at leisure in another context (a teacher also differently motivated and with more focused academic interests – largely represented by the project to write a whole series of books on the liberal arts which would evidence the proper linkage between them and a neo-Platonic world-view). See G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 776; and R.J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement – the Retreat of Cassiciacum and the "Monastery" of Tagaste', *SP* 5 (1962), 336.

⁵⁹ *Acad.* 2.7.18; *ord.* 1.5.14; and *ord.* 1.8.22, respectively.

⁶⁰ *beata u.* 4.35. The hymn (*Hymni* 2.32, cf. the index in *CCL* 29. 356) is recounted more fully in the *Confessions* (9.12.32; cf. 9.7.15). It was one most probably sung by the Catholics in the basilica in Milan during the previous year when the Arians had tried to storm the church. For more information and some background, see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 81-83.

⁶¹ see p. 12-15 and Table 1, below, for references.

⁶² apparently it was Augustine who led Romanianus into Manichaeism; see J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 84-85; and G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 64.

⁶³ in fact, the *Confessions* relates that at one point both men, along with several others, agreed to drop their worldly pursuits and form a philosophic community (a plan which collapsed over how wives would be accommodated); cf. *Acad.* 2.2.4 and *conf.* 6.14.24. See also Brown's comments (*Augustine* (1967), 90), which also refer to *conf.* 6.8.17; and the observations on this first attempted community (with critique of Courcelle) by J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 379-380.

⁶⁴ virtually personified as 'Lady Philosophy'.

⁶⁵ *in philosophiae gremium confugere coegisset ... Ipsa enim docet et uere docet nihil omnino colendum esse totumque contemni oportere, quicquid mortalibus oculis cernitur, quicquid ullus sensus attingit. Ipsa uerissimum et secretissimum deum perspicue se demonstraturam promittit et iam iamque quasi per lucidas nubes ostentare dignatur.* *CCL* 29. 5.

appears concerned that Romanianus has either reverted to the Manichees or adopted skepticism. Hence, he sent him this 'written version of a discussion between Trygetius and Licentius' (*Acad.* 1.1.4),⁶⁶ addressing the skepticism of the New Academy. In fact, Trygetius, Licentius, as well as Alypius (though he is absent from the second part of the discussion as described in the second book), and above all Augustine, participated in the interlocution.

Against the Academics, which consists of three books, probably was not the first work completed. According to Augustine's later *Review*, only book one was complete when he composed *On the Happy Life* and then *On Order*.⁶⁷ It appears that only then did he compose the last two books of *Against the Academics*. The two intervening works record disputations of slightly larger groups. *On the Happy Life* reflects the discussion which took place on Augustine's birthday in the baths with the whole Cassiciacum community present.⁶⁸ *On Order* was initially occasioned by an seemingly chance awakening of Augustine, Trygetius, and Licentius one night by the irregularity of some running water. This precipitated a discussion on whether all things were governed by order (such as the apparently chance accumulation of falling leaves in a stream). Augustine then decided to continue the discussion as a formal disputation which would form the basis of a work for Zenobius – another of Augustine's Milanese friends with whom he had discussed the question of order and evil, and to whom he had promised a full discourse on the subject.⁶⁹ The disputation was further broadened to include Monnica.⁷⁰ The last of the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*, the *Soliloquies*, was composed by Augustine alone.⁷¹ These extant *Dialogues* certainly do not represent the sum total of Augustine's discussion or personal meditation at Cassiciacum. He recorded in *On Order* that he was accustomed to spending the first half of the night, and sometimes the second half if necessary, in his bed awake thinking through some issue or other.⁷²

⁶⁶ *Nam disputationem, quam inter se Trygetius et Licentius habuerunt, relatum in litteras tibi misi.* CCL 29. 5.

⁶⁷ *retr.* 1.1.2; cf. J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 52, for a summary and a listing of the dates given by both Perler (*Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 189-190), who is to be preferred, and Ohlmann (*De S. Augustini Dialogis in Cassiciaco scriptis*, Diss. Strasbourg (1897), 17-27). However, see the discussion of sequence in Appendix A, p. 271, with reference to G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 778-779, who highlights the difficulties for any fixed chronological scheme.

⁶⁸ *beata u.* 6.23.

⁶⁹ *ep.* 2 and *ord.* 1.7.20.

⁷⁰ *ord.* 1.11.31.

⁷¹ *retr.* 1.4.1. The 'dialogue' here was between Augustine and Reason.

⁷² *ord.* 1.3.6. One would imagine that this was not too regular an experience in light of the apparently fragile condition of Augustine's health (see n. 43), but the zeal for truth and the centrality of intellectual inquiry to the philosophic life at Cassiciacum did lead to diligent effort within the framework of philosophic *otium* (cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), ch. 11).

Life at Cassiciacum was one of balanced leisure in the tradition of philosophic *otium*. For the most part, it was a time of rest, recuperation, and pleasant exploration of new vistas of understanding. There were significant developments on many fronts as Augustine convincingly moved past skepticism and progressed in the combined neo-Platonic Christian pursuit of true philosophy, or the happy life, especially in contemplation of the order of God's universe and the place of evil in it.⁷³ Nevertheless, the preceding brief summary of the general context and the disputations will have to suffice for the present discussion, which must be limited to the specific task of culling information relevant to Augustine's view of the church.

CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS AT CASSICIACUM: BELIEFS AND SCRIPTURES

Nowhere in the *Dialogues* did Augustine directly mention the church (*ecclesia*). He did, however, refer to hymns,⁷⁴ to Ambrose (the bishop at Milan under whom Augustine was at this time a catechumen),⁷⁵ indirectly to baptism, and to a number of specifically Christian teachings.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the *Dialogues* employ scripture on a number of occasions as an authority for theory and practice. Christian scriptures and beliefs were certainly important to Augustine at Cassiciacum. These references and their ecclesial connections will be considered in terms of three categories: Augustine's doctrinal beliefs; his understanding of religious practice (*i.e.* his religious life as discussed and revealed in the *Dialogues*); and his sense of community. Throughout, the sources for the Christian information which he employed, and which appear to be the basis of the elements in each category, will be sought.

The doctrinal beliefs which Augustine held give some insight into what had been absorbed from his Christian environment in Milan (especially under the teaching of Ambrose). Augustine articulated specifically Christian beliefs on a number of occasions in the course of the *Dialogues*. While in many cases these beliefs were understood in Platonic terms, their fundamental Christian character is unmistakable. He referred to and affirmed: the Trinity;⁷⁷ some attributes of God, such as being light,

⁷³ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), notes the move from the 'sunny surface of his thought' and 'studied charm of his personal relationships' in the first three (earlier) dialogues (p. 117, *cf.* 119 for examples of the communities 'state of continuous intellectual excitement'), to the 'mood of intimate self searching' seen in the *Soliloquies* 'by the end of his stay' (p. 118).

⁷⁴ *cf.* n. 59 and 60.

⁷⁵ *cf. conf.* 5.14.25 and Augustine's letter to Ambrose (*conf.* 9.5.13); discussed in P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 207.

⁷⁶ see below and G. Bonner, 'Augustine (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 530.

⁷⁷ *ord.* 2.5.16; *beata u.* 4.35.

or omnipotent;⁷⁸ the incarnation⁷⁹ and full deity of Christ;⁸⁰ and Christ's redemptive work for the cleansing of bodily sin, secured by faith.⁸¹ Furthermore, he attested the divine origin of scripture and ascribed authority to it.⁸² These elements encourage an inquiry into the source(s) of such doctrinal beliefs and consideration of what role the church may have played in this regard.

The primary source of Augustine's Christian ideas was scripture. In nearly all of the citations referred to above, it is given directly as a source.⁸³ In one of the three cases where Augustine was not making reference to scripture, he was making a statement about the divine nature of revelation itself (*sol.* 2.6.12). In another (*Acad.* 3.6.13), Augustine appears to be consciously basing his entire discussion, at this point, on 1 Corinthians 13 (especially verse 13).⁸⁴ In the last case, the reference to the Trinity in *On the Happy Life* (4.35) was drawn directly from a hymn of Ambrose.⁸⁵ Augustine also employed scripture, by means of citation or reference, frequently in the *Dialogues*.⁸⁶ His knowledge of scripture seems to derive from two sources: first, his own reading; and second, from exposure to teaching in the church – especially of Ambrose.

In *Against the Academics* (2.2.5), Augustine related his conversion experience for the first time to Romanianus and to his readers.⁸⁷ Of primary importance here, he stressed the role which the reading of the Apostle Paul played in this event. His

⁷⁸ *beata u.* 4.35.

⁷⁹ *ord.* 2.5.16.

⁸⁰ *ord.* 1.10.29; *beata u.* 4.34; *Acad.* 2.1.1; (including the theme of 'Christ's authority as Wisdom and Truth' (*Acad.* 3.42f.; *ord.* 2.27, 29); cf. G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 776).

⁸¹ cf. *sol.* 2.6.12f.; *beata u.* 4.36; and *Acad.* 3.19.42.

⁸² *Acad.* 3.6.13; *beata u.* 1.4.

⁸³ in his Cassiciacum writings, Augustine only used the term *scriptura* once (*ord.* 1.11.32). More often, he uses the terms *mysterium* and (*nostra*) *sacra*, cf. n. 30 and 86. In his note on Augustine's use of 'mysteries' at *Acad.* 2.1.1, D.J. Kavanagh (*FC* 5 (1948)) notes that at that time 'Augustine usually employs the terms *mysteria* and *sacra* to designate the Sacred Scriptures'. See also, Appendix B, p. 302-303 and n. 120. More generally, see Doignon's section on 'Les citations scripturaires' in 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 74-75, where he makes the observation that Augustine's citations act not 'comme les rouages d'une investigation théologique en quête de l'unité intertrinitaire de Dieu ... mais comme les supports d'une argumentation qui se situe à un autre niveau'.

⁸⁴ cf. for support the number of citations from 1 Corinthians in Table 1 below.

⁸⁵ i.e. *Hymni* 2.32 (cf. *CCL* 29. 356), cf. n. 60.

⁸⁶ see *Acad.* 2.1.1; 3.19.42; 3.20.43; *beata u.* 1.4; *ord.* 2.5.16; 2.9.27 ('*mysterium*'); *ord.* 1.11.32 ('*scriptura*'); *beata u.* 4.34 ('*auctoritate diuina*'); and *beata u.* 4.35 ('*fonte ueritatis*'); as a representative list.

⁸⁷ it is beyond the scope of this chapter to interact here with all the literature on Augustine's famous conversion in Milan (as well as his other 'conversions', e.g. to philosophy through reading Cicero's *Hortensius*). Particularly relevant points are summarized in the Introduction and picked up elsewhere in this chapter and the next (e.g. Ambrose's sermons, Ponticianus's story, etc.). For a good summary of the facts and issues as well as an admirably select bibliography, see G. Madec's article on 'Conuersio' in the *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 7/8 (1994), 1282-1294 (esp. 1289-1292).

narration concludes with the following statement: 'I seized the Apostle Paul and ... read through all of it thoroughly with the greatest attention and purity (*castissime*)' (*Acad.* 2.2.5).⁸⁸ This probably refers to the whole book of Romans.⁸⁹ The careful reading of scripture appears to be an important element of Augustine's religious life at Cassiciacum.⁹⁰ This supposition is reinforced when one considers the direct references and allusions to scriptural passages in the *Dialogues*; these are summarized in the following table.⁹¹

Table 1: Scripture references and allusions in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	<i>Dialogues</i> Citation
Genesis	1.26	<i>sol.</i> 1.1.4 ^a ⁹²
Psalms ⁹³	79.8	<i>ord.</i> 1.8.22
Matthew ⁹⁴	7.7 7.8	<i>Acad.</i> 2.3.9 <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.1.5 ^a

⁸⁸ *Itaque titubans properans haesitans ... arripio apostolum Paulum ... Perlegi totum intentissime atque castissime.* CCL 29. 21. There seems to be a parallel to Victorinus' careful reading of scripture in *conf.* 8.2.4 in this statement.

⁸⁹ *cf. conf.* 7.21.27; 8.6.14; 8.12.29. It is noteworthy, however, that Romans is not cited in the *Dialogues* (see Table 1 following). In light of the subject matter of the disputations and the incidental nature of scriptural quotations, however, those references and allusions which are found should be seen as giving a minimum indication of Augustine's familiarity with and reading of scripture at the villa. The issue of Augustine's reading of Paul, and esp. Romans, has been touched upon by a number of scholars in the debates over the garden conversion scene of the *Confessions*. L.C. Ferrari, in his articles 'Saint Augustine's Conversion Scene: The End of a Modern Debate?', *SP* 22 (1989), 235-250 (esp. 239-241) and 'Paul at the Conversion of Augustine (*Conf.* VIII, 12, 29-30)', *Aug. Stud.* 11 (1980), 5-20, has specifically rejected the reading of Romans 13.13-14 in *conf.* 8.12.29 (since the passage is not found in Augustine's early writings). For correctives to the implications which Ferrari draws from this for the historicity of the *Confessions* conversion record, see F. Van Fleteren, 'St. Augustine's Theory of Conversion', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 74 n. 7; and the qualifications by J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 66-67. See also O'Donnell's comments on *conf.* 7.21.27 (*Confessions* v. 2. (1992), 477f.

⁹⁰ *cf. below*, esp. Table 1. G. Bonner in his evaluation of 'Augustine as Biblical Scholar' (in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* v. 1 (1970), 541-563), states that 'Augustine can hardly have undertaken much serious and detailed biblical study until just before his ordination. He read the Psalms ... at Cassiciacum ... with deep emotion, and was moved to tears by the hymns and canticles of the church of Milan (*conf.* 9.4.8; 9.6.14), but the writings which he produced in the first years of his life as a Christian are only relatively sparsely furnished with scriptural references' (p. 543). While it may be the case that 'detailed' study did not take place, it would be wrong to go on and conclude that regular reading and thoughtful consideration of scripture was absent from this period.

⁹¹ the index of scriptural citations for *Acad.*, *beata u.*, and *ord.* are found in CCL 29. 355-356, and for *sol.* in CSEL 89. 232. In one or two cases, I have suggested additional references as will be indicated in the footnotes.

⁹² an 'a' denotes a direct allusion to (or paraphrase of) a passage of scripture; otherwise the references indicate a quotation.

⁹³ *cf. conf.* 9.4.8, 9, and 12; and G. Bonner, 'Augustine as Biblical Scholar', *The Cambridge History of the Bible* v. 1 (1970), 543.

⁹⁴ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 103, is confident that Augustine had read the Gospels already at Milan.

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	<i>Dialogues</i> Citation
John	3.17 (<i>et passim</i>) 6.35 6.48 14.6 16.8 18.36	<i>ord.</i> 1.10.29 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 (twice, one ^a) <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a <i>beata u.</i> 4.34 <i>beata u.</i> 4.35 ^a ⁹⁵ <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a <i>ord.</i> 1.11.32
Romans	(entire) ⁹⁶	<i>Acad.</i> 2.2.5 (indication)
1 Corinthians	1.24 13.13 15.54	<i>Acad.</i> 2.1.1 ^a <i>beata u.</i> 4.34 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.1.6 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.6.12-1.7.14 ^a <i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a
Galatians	4.9	<i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ⁹⁷
Colossians	2.8	<i>Acad.</i> 3.19.42 ^a ⁹⁸ <i>ord.</i> 1.11.32 ^a
1 John	4.4	<i>sol.</i> 1.1.3 ^a ⁹⁹

From Table 1, it is possible to assert that at Cassiciacum Augustine was at least familiar with a small but significant amount of the New Testament (probably including all of Romans (as noted), as well as John and 1 Corinthians)¹⁰⁰ along with parts of Genesis and the Psalms.¹⁰¹ In light of the sense of sincere and zealous searching for truth which pervades the *Dialogues* and the statement in *Against the Academics* illustrating that careful study of scripture was practiced by Augustine before Cassiciacum and the deference to and use of scripture in the *Dialogues*, it seems probable that Augustine

⁹⁵ possible; not noted in the critical edition (CCL 29) but as a 'paraphrase' of John 14.6 by L. Schopp in his translation of 'The Happy Life', *The Writings of Saint Augustine* v. 1, FC 5 (1948), 83 n. 28.

⁹⁶ see above, n. 88 and 89, as well as the references to the reading of Paul in the *Confessions* (*conf.* 6.4.14; 8.9.29-30; and esp. 7.21.27).

⁹⁷ not noted in the critical edition (CSEL 89), but rightly identified by G. Watson in *Saint Augustine: Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1990), 27.

⁹⁸ possible but doubtful allusion noted by D.J. Kavanagh in his translation, FC 5 (1948), 219 n. 2.

⁹⁹ an uncertain but possible allusion not noted in the critical edition but in G. Watson, *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1990), 25.

¹⁰⁰ since there are quotes from the span of both John and 1 Corinthians.

¹⁰¹ for the Psalms at Cassiciacum, see *conf.* 9.4.8-10. Coming from a Manichaean background, it is not surprising that Augustine was more familiar with the New Testament than the Old.

devoted time to regular scripture reading and meditation and was more than vaguely familiar with the passages which he used.¹⁰²

CHRISTIAN TEACHING AND CATECHUMENATE

Sources of Augustine's doctrinal beliefs, as well as his religious practices,¹⁰³ besides scripture are also suggested by the *Dialogues*. As mentioned previously, in *On the Happy Life* (4.36), Augustine recorded part of a hymn of Ambrose. He also made reference to the bishop of Milan on two other occasions: once, to Ambrose's sermons (or other 'discourses');¹⁰⁴ and on another occasion, to the bishop's 'writings [which] have taught us in the manner of living' (*sol.* 2.14.26).¹⁰⁵ Such references appear to be in accordance with the *Confessions*' record of Augustine's shift to something more than a stance of purely 'professional interest' in listening to Ambrose's sermons well before retiring to Cassiciacum.¹⁰⁶

At Milan, Augustine had begun to involve himself in some aspects of the Christian community. Specifically, other than attending sermons, he seems to have participated in the singing of the Milanese Catholic congregation¹⁰⁷ and also was receiving and/or soliciting Christian texts from his Christian circle of friends in Milan.¹⁰⁸ This nascent involvement is further illustrated by the few references to sacraments and church practice in the *Dialogues*. Augustine had become a catechumen of the Catholic church in 384¹⁰⁹ and was going to be baptized into the church at Milan following the time at Cassiciacum.¹¹⁰ He alluded to both of these aspects of Christian initiation in the

¹⁰² it is worth noting the increase in scripture usage in *sol.*, which being later and a more personal treatise, may indicate Augustine's progress in the reading of scripture and of incorporating it into his writing, even during the months at Cassiciacum (*cf.* also n. 133 below). This must, of course, remain speculative.

¹⁰³ which will be dealt with in their own right below.

¹⁰⁴ '*noster sacerdos*' *beata u.* 1.4. Augustine refers to some other 'discourses' of Manlius Theodorus ('*tui sermones*'): *Animaduerti enim et saepe in sacerdotis nostri et aliquando in sermonibus tuis, cum de deo cogitaretur, nihil omnino corporis esse cogitandum, neque cum de anima; nam id est unum in rebus proximum deo.* CCL 29. 67. A possible conclusion is that Augustine was referring to some of Ambrose's writings or written sermons.

¹⁰⁵ *praesertim cum hic ante oculos nostros sit ille, in quo ipsam eloquentiam, quam mortuam dolebamus, perfectam reuixisse cognouimus. Illene nos sinet, cum scriptis suis uiuendi modum docuerit, uiuendi ignorare naturam?* CSEL 89. 80. This reference is not so clear. See J.J. O'Donnell's comments on why he feels 'There is no reason not to apply the *sol.* passage to Ambrose' (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 342-343). T.F. Gillian (*Soliloquies* in *FC* 5 (1948), 411 n. 1) and J.S. Burleigh (*Augustine: Earlier Writings*, LCC 6 (1953), 55), however, both take the 'great man' to be Ambrose in their translations. G. Watson (*Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1986), 193-194) lists Ambrose as the likely but not certain candidate.

¹⁰⁶ *cf.* esp. 5.13.23.

¹⁰⁷ *cf.* *beata u.* 4.35 and *conf.* 9.12.32.

¹⁰⁸ see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 90.

¹⁰⁹ *conf.* 5.14.25.

¹¹⁰ *conf.* 9.5.13-9.6.14.

Dialogues. In *On the Happy Life*, he referred to baptism as ‘the rite of the most sacred mysteries’ and one of ‘the first two sacraments’ (*beata u.* 3.18). In connection with the practice of the exorcism of evil spirits performed by the priest before the rite, Augustine recorded, ‘To renounce it [the offending spirit] those who preside over us are said to lay on hands or to exorcise,¹¹¹ that is to expel it through a prayer to God’.¹¹² Clearly, Augustine was familiar with the rite of baptism and affirmed its efficacy.¹¹³ Later, in *On Order*, he again alluded to baptism in connection with a discussion on evil spirits.¹¹⁴ He stated that the power, compassion, humility, and nature of divine authority are ‘delivered to us secretly and firmly by the sacred things into which we are now being initiated – in which [sacred mysteries/rites] the life of the good is purified most easily, not with the ambiguities of disputations, but by the authority of the mysteries’ (*ord.* 2.9.27).¹¹⁵ The interpretation of this quote as indicative of conscious catechetical preparation by Augustine at Cassiciacum, and of his intention toward baptism generally, is strengthened by the simple fact that it was the desire for baptism which brought the stay at Cassiciacum to a close.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the connection of ‘*sacris*’, ‘*secretius*’, and ‘*mysterium*’ suggest baptism and the ecclesiastical initiation process generally.¹¹⁷ Certain elements of Christian initiation (such as the creed) were considered ‘secrets’.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, in Augustine’s early

¹¹¹ see C. Mohrmann, ‘Comment saint Augustin s’est familiarisé avec le latin des chrétiens’, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* (Tome 1, *Le latin des chrétiens*, 21961), 383-389, where she notes, in connection with ‘*exorcizare*’ and the definition which immediately follows, that this is an example of the hesitancy with which Augustine the classical rhetorician adopted Christian neologisms. She observes generally that Augustine did not use Christian technical terms naturally during the Cassiciacum period (p. 388).

¹¹² *quod ritu castissimorum sacrorum spiritus inmundus, ... cui excludendo qui praesunt, manum inponere uel exorcizare dicuntur, hoc est per diuina eum adiurando expellere.* CCL 29. 75. Aside from the references to Ambrose and this allusion, neither clerical nor ecclesiastical terminology generally appears in the *Dialogues* (see Appendix B, Tables 9 and 8, p. 294-295, and n. 70).

¹¹³ something which is to be expected from one anticipating (even preparing) for baptism, however seriously. J.J. O’Donnell implies that such ‘preparation’ at Cassiciacum might have been little more than a test of moral resolve (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 70).

¹¹⁴ *ord.* 2.9.27, now discussing the danger which the ‘invisible spirits’ present to the human element of authority.

¹¹⁵ *quae omnia sacris, quibus initiamur, secretius firmitusque traduntur, in quibus bonorum uita facillime non disputationum ambagibus sed mysteriorum auctoritate purgatur.* CCL 29. 122-123.

¹¹⁶ *conf.* 9.6.14; cf. *conf.* 9.4.12 *ad fin.* The influence that the information about Victorinus (cf. *conf.* 8.2.3-8.5.10) may have had on Augustine’s view of baptism as he returned to Milan is considered in ch. 2, p. 33-44.

¹¹⁷ in this connection, might the ‘writings’ of Ambrose referred to above be ones involved in catechetical instruction? Although current understanding of Ambrosian chronology does not allow a convenient suggestion from Ambrose’s known works, these could also have been written sermons. The text does not demand an interpretation which places these ‘writings’ at Cassiciacum, however; but the reading given here seems at least plausible. Issues surrounding the chronology of the relevant Ambrosian corpus are addressed in ch. 2 and 3.

¹¹⁸ these elements, and Augustine’s experience of Christian initiation generally, are discussed in detail in ch. 2 and 3. Words like ‘*baptisma*’ do not appear in Augustine’s works until *mor. ecc.*, and

writings – including the *Dialogues* – *mysterium* is primarily (though not exclusively) used to indicate a body of saving knowledge to be received and believed.¹¹⁹ Baptism was in many ways synonymous with a door into the communion of the church.¹²⁰ Hence, the examples given in the *Dialogues* of general priestly activity, specifically in connection with baptism itself, may reflect an image of the church as the locus of divine authority. If these suggestions obtain, they would mark the first indication in Augustine's writings of a conception of the church as a place of instruction and salvation.¹²¹

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND TRUE PHILOSOPHY

Aspects in the *Dialogues* beyond official instruction or congregational observation indicate Augustine's involvement in the Christian community. His philosophic life at Cassiciacum also reflects religious practice and devotion. In addition to the study of scripture, the most obvious part of his religious activity is the considerable amount of time Augustine spent in prayer. On several occasions he refers to his own time of prayer,¹²² indicating that it was his pattern to pray each morning and evening.¹²³ In fact, he stated that everyone took part in 'daily prayers to God' (*ord.* 1.8.25).¹²⁴ His own *Soliloquies* begin with quite an impressive prayer.¹²⁵ If this prayer gives insight into those of his daily routine, it would certainly add a very religious tenor to his stay at Cassiciacum. Despite its significance, Augustine's prayer life at Cassiciacum does not reveal anything in the way of sources for his Christian information or ecclesial connections (*e.g.* to concrete examples of personal or corporate prayer which were sources for the form and content of his own). Therefore, following his conversion, Augustine's life as revealed in the *Dialogues* has a religious tenor of a clearly Christian character, but the objects of inspiration for the particular religious practices observed are not clear.

As mentioned before, it is anachronistic to draw a sharp dividing line between Augustine's 'philosophic' and 'religious' lives which are both (speaking from a

symbolum does not appear at all in the works up through *uera rel.*, the last written before Augustine's journey to Hippo in 391 (see Appendix B, p. 291).

¹¹⁹ see Appendix B, p. 302-303, esp n. 119, for lists of such uses in the *Dialogues*; see esp. *ord.* 2.5.16 (*ueranda mysteria*) and 2.17.46 (*uerandis mysteriis*), both in connection with *fides*.

¹²⁰ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith: A Manual of Catechetics* (1959), 6-7; *ord.* 2.9.26 (*cf.* 2.9.27) may provide an interesting parallel.

¹²¹ *cf. conf.* 5.14.24-25; 6.5.7; 7.7.11.

¹²² *Acad.* 2.1.2; *ord.* 1.4.10; 1.15.30; *sol.* 1.15.30.

¹²³ *ord.* 1.8.22; *ep.* 3.4. It is probable that *ep.* 1-4 (and possibly 13) were written from Cassiciacum, G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 779.

¹²⁴ *redditisque deo cotidianis uotis. Deinde ego quoque surrexi ... ire coeperamus in balneas.* CCL. 29. 101.

¹²⁵ *sol.* 1.1.2-4.

modern point of view) manifest in the *Dialogues*. Augustine pursued a specific lifestyle at Cassiciacum, and he pursued it as a Christian (e.g. believing Christian teachings, relating personally to God in a relationship enabled through Christ, and seeking guidance from the Christian scriptures). The basic mode of that 'philosophic' lifestyle, however, did not originally come to him from a Christian source. Even before his conversion, he had been enamored with the idea of leaving his worldly pursuits in order to withdraw into a community where the individuals would mutually support their pursuit of philosophy (e.g. *conf.* 6.14.24).¹²⁶ Arrangements for such an undertaking were initiated earlier at Milan,¹²⁷ though in vain. Only some time after this attempt did Augustine come to hear about Christian asceticism from Ponticianus.¹²⁸ Before Ponticianus' revelation to him, Augustine (though theoretically a regular in the church) had no idea of the Christian ascetic phenomena which were gaining influence in the West during this time. He had never heard of Antony, the most famous ascetic, nor did he even know that there was a monastery in the environs of Milan affiliated to the church.¹²⁹ Such ignorance is some measure of his aloof status (with respect to the general Christian community) during his first couple of years at Milan.

Halliburton has discussed the common antique 'inclination to retirement'¹³⁰ in some detail and highlights the two aspects contained within the term '*anachorein*': the first meaning 'to withdraw from society; and [the] second ... what can only be described as a "spiritual retreat", retirement into oneself'.¹³¹ It seems clear that the fundamental mode of life which is exemplified at Cassiciacum was not primarily

¹²⁶ see J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 141-142, where he notes that Augustine and his friends 'may have been following the example of some Manichaean friends at Rome [rejected, properly, by Halliburton, see below] or even Plotinus himself, who had planned such a community' devoted entirely to the pursuit of philosophy. On this episode and its general implications for Cassiciacum, see R.J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement', *SP* 5 (1962), 329-340, who refers to *Acad.* 2.2.4-6 for Augustine's recognition of the 'association (of this planned society) with the retreat of Cassiciacum' (p. 330; see also J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 380). Halliburton also lists examples of other such experiments or 'retreats' with which Augustine was acquainted (p. 330-331, summarized from P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (1950), 178f.) and emphasizes the significance of Manlius Theodorus among these examples (p. 334-335, 337). His comment on p. 331 is noteworthy: 'It does not of course necessarily follow that any one of these examples of retreat in community was the immediate prefiguration of the retreat of St. Augustine. On the other hand, however, the idea of retreat in the ancient world was scarcely new, and though one may attribute a measure of originality to the pattern of the society formed by St. Augustine at Cassiciacum, there are certain features of this pattern which would serve to associate it either directly or indirectly with an already existing tradition' (i.e. that of the 'inclination to retirement'). J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 379-380, also lists problems with Courcelle's interpretation (cf. esp. *Recherches sur les Confessions* (2nd 1968), 254).

¹²⁷ 'perhaps late 385', J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 380.

¹²⁸ *conf.* 8.6.14-8.7.16.

¹²⁹ *conf.* 8.6.14-15; cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 40.

¹³⁰ a phrase which he draws from A.-J. Festugière; R.J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement', *SP* 5 (1962), esp. 333.

¹³¹ both of which are emphasized throughout the *Dialogues*.

generated by the church, or for that matter the Christian community. There are no indications within the *Dialogues* of the kind of ascetic behavior which would have characterized the lives of the figures described to Augustine by Ponticianus. It is likely that such Christian examples primarily struck Augustine in terms of their intense commitment to grasp as much as they could of God and in that their first Christian endeavors entailed commitments to celibacy and renunciation of secular ambition – the very factors which were already in his mind.¹³² Nevertheless, it is also clear from the *Dialogues* that more and more specifically Christian elements of religious practice, understood in philosophic terms, began to permeate Augustine's life of *otium* while at this retreat.¹³³

At this point, Augustine believed that with a few adjustments, such as adopting the incarnation, neo-Platonism could be reconciled with Christianity. Indeed, the two are presented as complementary (cf. *Acad.* 3.20.43). Augustine was actively pursuing a full integration of the two as he sought God and to understand what he grasped in mind. He had already found in the Christian gospel that which allowed him to overcome the 'stains of the body' and thus to achieve the ideal which Plotinus had set before him – to see God.¹³⁴ At Cassiciacum, Augustine was continuing to try to

¹³² celibacy and rejection of a secular career were common for many Christians besides those living in 'monastic' settings or as anchorites (cf. the different types mentioned later by Augustine in *mor. ecc.* 31.65-33.73). The general (and highly varied) state of Western asceticism and 'monasticism' will be dealt with in chapters three and following, with particular reference to the arguments and claims of A. Zunkeller and G. Lawless and the observations of J.K. Coyle.

¹³³ cf. *conf.* 9.2.4. There appear to be hints of increased religious behavior on Augustine's part (e.g. in prayer, or in his use of Christian terminology such as *c(h)aritas*, cf. Appendix B, Table 15 and p. 310) as one moves from the first three dialogues to the *Soliloquia*; but as implied above, this may simply be a result of the more personal nature of the work – see n. 102 above for a similar phenomenon with respect to Augustine's scriptural citations.

¹³⁴ *Enneads* 1.6.7, 9; cf. *sol.* 1.6.13-7.14; and *conf.* 8.17.23 (as cited in Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 96). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to address the enduring discussion over which writings of Plotinus and Porphyry Augustine may have read at Cassiciacum (or during his Milanese period generally), or which of the two exerted a greater influence on him. In my opinion, Augustine had read at least *Enneads* 1.6 (*On Beauty*, with its many ideas similar, in expression or concept, to those of Christianity – such as the cleansing of the soul in 1.6.5-6), and possibly also 5.8 (*On Free Will and the Will of the One*; cf. H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1992), xxif.), and *The Return of the Soul* by Porphyry (cf. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 180; and O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 136). J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 421-424, summarizes the issues and discussion. See J. Doignon, 'Etat des questions relatives aux premiers Dialogues de saint Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 75-76 and 83-86, for notes and literature on the influence of Plotinus and Porphyry (including a summary of the 'heritage of Plotinus' and points of contact with the *Enneads* (p. 83-84), possible vehicles for the appropriation of both neo-Platonists (p. 83), and an analysis of the debate over whose influence was most significant and when – in which he eventually sides with those who claim the 'honor' for Porphyry (p. 84-86)). Also see G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), who agrees that 'Porphyry a gagné des points avec les études de A. Solignac, H. Dörrie, J. Pépin, P. Hadot, I. Hadot, J.J. O'Meara' (p. 16) – see also his subtle and balanced comments on how Augustine subsumed neo-Platonism within a proper understanding of Christianity. This was signified above all by the recognition, gained with the aid of Simplicianus, that neo-Platonism found its culmination in 'ce qui est pour lui l'essence même du christianisme, le mystère de l'incarnation du Verbe' (p. 20, the final paragraph, and the first two of p. 21). Even the admirable bibliographies by these authors (to which

understand Christian teaching philosophically and to philosophize in Christian terms. Of the many examples found in the *Dialogues*, one of particular importance is his discussion of the bearing which faith, hope, and love have on the pursuit of the *beata uita*. He states in the *Soliloquies* that,

the gaze [of the soul] itself, however, is still unable to turn even healthy eyes to the light unless these three things remain fixed, namely: *faith*, by which it [the soul] believes that the thing which is held by the gaze is such that when it is seen it will yield happiness; *hope*, by which it trusts that it will see, if it gazes intently; and *charity*, by which it desires to see and to enjoy. Then, the gaze is followed by the vision of God itself ... because there is nothing more to consider. And this is truly perfect virtue – reason arriving at its end, *from which the blessed life* [naturally] *follows* (italic mine, *sol.* 1.6.13).¹³⁵

This progression of the ‘blessed life’ is summarized by Monnica near the end of *On the Happy Life* when she referred to ‘the happy life, which is the perfect life, to which we must think that we can attain soon by solid faith, joyful hope, and ardent love’ (*beata u.* 4.35).¹³⁶

The allusion to 1 Corinthians 13.13 in the preceding *Soliloquies* citation (and the others) is clear.¹³⁷ Moreover, it illustrates once again that little direct evidence for the sources of the Christian ideas at Cassiciacum exist other than Augustine’s own reading of, thinking through, and application of Christian scriptures. While this must be the primary supposition, Christian teaching and community may also have functioned as sources for Augustine’s early Christian practice. In regard to Christian teaching, Augustine refers to Ambrose, ‘who taught us in his writings the way of living’, in the *Soliloquies* (2.14.26). It is certainly the case that he had listened to Ambrose’s sermons intently at Milan, and those few indications of the bishop’s input and influence which are found in the *Dialogues* are probably a minimum reflection. Nevertheless, the connection to Ambrose¹³⁸ and statements like that from the *Soliloquies* might suggest

should be added C. Harrison’s helpful list in *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (1992), 8 n. 32) do not provide a comprehensive list of the literature, but they will certainly suffice.

¹³⁵ *Sed et ipse aspectus quamuis iam sanos oculos conuertere in lucem non potest, nisi tria illa permaneant: fides, qua credatur ita se rem habere, ad quam conuertendus aspectus est, ut uisa faciat beatum; spes, qua cum bene aspexerit, se uisurum esse praesumat; caritas, qua uidere perfruique desideret. Iam aspectum sequitur ipsa uisio dei, qui est finis aspectus, non quod iam non sit, sed quod nihil amplius habeat, quo se intendat. Et haec est uere perfecta uirtus, ratio perueniens ad finem suum, quam beata uita consequitur.* CSEL 89. 21.

¹³⁶ *Haec est nullo ambigente beata uita, quae uita perfecta est, ad quam nos festinantes posse perducere solida fide alacri spe flagrante caritate praesumendum est.* CCL 29. 85. See *ord.* 2.8.25 and *sol.* 1.6.13 for similar reflections on faith, hope, and love; as well as Appendix B, p. 310.

¹³⁷ Augustine continues in the text, ‘Three things, therefore, are of relevance to the soul: that it should be healthy; that it should gaze; and that it should see. The three others: faith, hope, and charity are always necessary for the first and second of the first three [*i.e.* the soul being healthy and gazing]; but for the third [*i.e.* seeing] all three are necessary in this life, though after this life only charity’ (*sol.* 1.7.14). *Tria igitur ad animam pertinent, ut sana sit, ut aspiciat, ut uideat. Alia uero tria, fides, spes, caritas, primo illorum trium et secundo semper sunt necessaria, tertio uero in hac uita omnia, post hanc uitam sola caritas.* CSEL 89. 23.

¹³⁸ a bishop was in some ways almost synonymous with a particular church.

that Augustine recognized the church as a teacher in the area of how to live life. If the writings referred to in the *Soliloquies*, the identity of which must remain uncertain, were catechetical extracts, Augustine would have read them with an eye to see how they recommended ways of spiritual purification, in expectation of the church's provision on that front.¹³⁹ However, such minimal and uncertain evidence provides no basis from which to generalize. In fact, Augustine's actions and attitude toward the other possible source for Christian information and practice, namely, the larger Christian community and specifically the actual group of Christians around him at Cassiciacum,¹⁴⁰ suggest that he may have felt that the church had fulfilled its role as teacher to him and that he was now equipped with sufficient authority and knowledge to pursue the 'blessed life' apart from direct connection with it. Despite his individual ability and his focus on the personal pursuit of understanding God and the soul, Augustine's life of true philosophy was undertaken in an intimate community.

CONCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY: RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND HIERARCHY

The idea of community is prevalent throughout the *Dialogues*. Details about life at Cassiciacum and Augustine's companions there are abundant. Augustine was concerned to provide the other residents with the mental equipment and spiritual motivation to share in his philosophic understanding and lifestyle.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Augustine stated on a number of occasions that he was desirous to learn from the others in the community as well.¹⁴² When asked by Reason in the *Soliloquies*, 'why ... do you want those people you love either to live or to live with you?', Augustine replied, 'In order that we can, together and in unison, inquire after our souls and God. For in this way the one who discovers something first can easily lead the others to it without difficulty' (*sol.* 1.12.20).¹⁴³ In addition, there can be little doubt that some, if not all, of the religious aspects of Augustine's daily life were also practiced by other residents. This was true at least of daily prayer¹⁴⁴ and would have been generally true in Monnica's case.¹⁴⁵ The last chapter of *On the Happy Life* records another aspect of

¹³⁹ *cf. conf.* 9.4.12 *ad fin.*

¹⁴⁰ I do not envisage the residents of Cassiciacum identifying themselves as any kind of recognized Christian community nor even that all the residents were Christians (though the majority were).

¹⁴¹ *e.g. ord.* 2.10.28; *cf. ord.* 2.7.24-2.9.27; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 119-120.

¹⁴² *see ord.* 1.5.13 for one example of this attitude.

¹⁴³ *R: Sed quaero abs te, cur eos homines, quos diligis, uel uiuere uel tecum uiuere cupias?*

A: Ut animas nostras et deum simul concorditer inquiramus. Ita enim facile, cui priori contingit inuentio, ceteros eo sine labore perducit. CSEL 89. 31.

¹⁴⁴ *ord.* 1.8.25.

¹⁴⁵ Augustine might well have gained insight into religious practice from observing Monnica. He was surely aware of her patterns of religious observance well before Cassiciacum, but there seems to have been renewed respect for her (and maybe them) at the villa; *cf. beata u.* 4.27; *ord.* 1.11.31-33 (*esp. 32 ad fin.*); and *conf.* 9.4.8.

life in the community, that of corporate religious activity. Having decided unanimously to pursue the happy life, 'to have God in the soul, that is, to enjoy God' by means of faith, hope, and love, the text indicates that the whole gathering (which apparently included all the residents) 'rejoiced and praised God' (*beata u.* 4.34, 36).¹⁴⁶ The fact that in this same passage Monnica is the one cited as singing the hymn, not Augustine, or that it is Licentius, who is recorded as humming a Psalm later on¹⁴⁷ or bursting into praise in *On Order* (1.5.14), may be significant (might this imply a hesitancy on Augustine's part to display piety, devotion, or adoration publicly?). Irrespective of the persons described, Augustine's interest in recording these events (if that is what he was doing), his presence in the scene in *On the Happy Life*, his reading of the Psalms,¹⁴⁸ and the affinity which he records in the *Confessions* for corporate singing at Milan,¹⁴⁹ may indicate an emerging concept of himself as a member of a worshipping community.¹⁵⁰ This conclusion, however, must remain tentative since the only other indication relating to worship comes in a passage where Augustine was speaking about the kind of life which those pursuing true philosophy ought to lead. Of these pursuers he said, 'Let them live suitably and in agreement, supported by faith, hope, and love; let them *worship*, think on, and seek God' (italics mine, *ord.* 2.8.25).¹⁵¹ Since, aside from an allusion to the golden rule, this passage has as its basis an exposition of the value of the liberal arts, no direct connection between the 'worship' referred to here and Augustine's idea of the church can be concluded.

In addition to references to the communal lifestyle, shared discussions, and worship at Cassiciacum in the *Dialogues*, insight into Augustine's conceptions of community are also present. A hierarchical aspect of Augustine's view of human society is clear in the *Dialogues*. This hierarchical aspect may have affected his early view of the church (both as an institution and as the general Christian community), or

¹⁴⁶ *Hoc est animis deum habere, id est deo perfrui.* CCL 29. 84; *Hic omnibus gaudentibus et laudantibus deum.* CCL 29. 85.

¹⁴⁷ *ord.* 1.8.22.

¹⁴⁸ as suggested above in Table 1; cf. *conf.* 9.4.8.

¹⁴⁹ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15.

¹⁵⁰ see Appendix B, Table 16 and p. 310-312 for the frequency of *colere* as well as comments on this and other terms for worship found in Augustine's early works. J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 86) has commented that 'The place of liturgical Christianity at Cassiciacum deserves attention'; in addition to Augustine's reference to the Christian 'mysteries' (esp. *ord.* 2.5.26 and 2.17.46), he identifies the use of John 6.35 in *sol.* 1.1.3 as an 'eucharistic phrase'. His conclusion in this connection that 'the subject of "church" was not absent' from Cassiciacum, however, does not follow except in the limited sense, discussed in the text, of Augustine's affiliation to and direction toward the place to receive the cleansing authority of Christ, which will allow unhindered pursuit of the (individual) spiritual life.

¹⁵¹ *Apte congruenterque uiuant, deum colant cogitent quaerant fide spe caritate subnixi.* CCL 29. 121. 'Worship' need not imply a communal aspect here.

'proto-ecclesiology'.¹⁵² During a discussion of the relationship between reason and authority in *On Order*, Augustine stated,

Reason is a movement of the mind, capable of distinguishing and connecting those things which are learned; to use its guidance to attain to understanding God or ... the soul only the rarest class of men¹⁵³ is able (*ord.* 2.11.30).¹⁵⁴

In one of the passages mentioned above in reference to baptism, Augustine spoke of the twofold nature of authority: 'Authority is partly divine and partly human, but the true, solid, and highest authority is that which is called divine' (*ord.* 2.9.27).¹⁵⁵ Despite the fact that 'human authority is, for the most part, deceiving', Augustine concluded this section by alluding, apparently, to the clergy.¹⁵⁶ He admitted that 'it is very difficult to scorn anyone believing in those who correctly give out the principles for [right] living'.¹⁵⁷ The implication in this passage is that, even if understanding is lacking, at least right belief is maintained.

In Augustine's conception, there are those, such as himself, who 'desire to learn all the good, great, and hidden things [to which] authority alone opens the door. And anyone who has entered [through this door] follows without hesitation the precepts of the perfect life' (*ord.* 2.9.26)¹⁵⁸ – that is, the philosophic life. Then, there are

those who are content with authority alone and who constantly give themselves to such moral living and upright vows, either despising or incapable of being instructed by the liberal and noblest disciplines¹⁵⁹ – I know not how I can call them happy who, while they live among men, live in such a manner.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² this aspect will be examined extensively in several of the following chapters.

¹⁵³ it should be noted that Augustine's idea is not class-bound in the normal sense; cf. *ord.* 1.11.31. Education was very important to Augustine and being educated was normally a class privilege. Still, in his view, it was possible to transcend such lacks as had been done in the past by 'those from much lower classes of society'.

¹⁵⁴ *Ratio est mentis motio, ea quae discuntur distinguendi et conectendi potens: qua duce uti ad deum intellegendum uel ipsam quae aut in nobis, aut usque quaque est animam, rarissimum omnino genus hominum potest.* CCL 29. 124 (PL 32. 1009 punctuation used); see also *ord.* 2.9.26.

¹⁵⁵ for Latin, see n. 157.

¹⁵⁶ to 'those men who, in as much as the senses of the ignorant can grasp them, give many demonstrations of their teachings and who do not live in a manner other than how they instruct that one ought to live' (see the following note).

¹⁵⁷ *Auctoritas autem partim diuina est, partim humana, sed uera firma summa ea est, quae diuina nominatur. ... Humana uero auctoritas plerumque fallit, in eis tamen iure uidetur excellere, qui, quantum imperitorum sensus capit, multa dant indicia doctrinarum suarum et non uiuunt aliter, quam uiuendum esse praecipunt. Quibus si aliqua etiam fortunae munera accesserint, quorum appareant usu magni contemtuque maiores, difficillimum omnino est, ut eis quisque uiuendi praecepta dantibus credens recte uituperetur.* CCL 29. 122-123.

¹⁵⁸ *ut omnibus bona magna et occulta discere cupientibus non aperiat nisi auctoritas ianuam. Quam quisque ingressus sine ulla dubitatione uitae optimae praecepta sectatur.* CCL 29. 122.

¹⁵⁹ the project to write a series of liberal arts 'textbooks', which Augustine conceived at Cassiciacum and afterward initiated at Milan, will be discussed in ch. 2. The idea of training in the liberal arts as a valuable asset in reaching spiritual truth is present in the *Dialogues* (e.g. *ord.* 1 ch. 8).

¹⁶⁰ *Qui autem sola auctoritate contenti bonis tantum moribus rectisque uotis constanter operam dederint aut contemnentes aut non ualentes disciplinis liberalibus atque optimis erudiri beatos eos quidem, cum inter homines uiuunt, nescio quo modo appellem.* CCL 29. 122. He continued to say,

'Consequently, although the authority of those who are good seems to be more safe for the multitude of the ignorant, reason is certainly more suitable for the educated' (*ord.* 2.9.26).¹⁶¹ Augustine seems to have thought that Christianity, and especially Christ, contained the key to spiritual cleansing and ascent to God and may have even viewed the church as the bastion of divine cleansing and enabling authority on earth. But he probably considered himself to be among those in need only of the fundamentals¹⁶² after which they are able to live a proper spiritual life on their own.¹⁶³ Hence, from the information in the *Dialogues*, it appears that after Augustine returned to Milan from Cassiciacum, once cleansed by his baptism, he would have felt perfectly comfortable to withdraw again into a philosophical Christian community with loose connections to the institutional church.¹⁶⁴ In fact, the connection with the church intensified in 387 rather than remained loose. This points to the significance of new ecclesial factors to be encountered in Milan.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the picture painted by the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* of Augustine's early understanding of the church is a minimalist one. While the truly Christian nature of Augustine's life at this point is unmistakable, what role he saw the church playing in this life is not clear. Nor is it very apparent what importance he would have ascribed to any such role. He did not speak of the church as such. Only indirectly can conclusions be drawn about his view of or relation to the larger Christian communion. It is possible to argue that the nature and subject matter of the *Dialogues*, being the stylized products of fairly focused internal discussions, obscure clearer links to the Christian

'I still believe firmly that, directly after leaving the body, they will be freed with more or less difficulty depending on how well or poorly they have lived' (*tamen inconcusse credo, mox ut hoc corpus reliquerint, eos, quo bene magis minusue uixerunt, eo facilius aut difficiliter liberari*).

¹⁶¹ *Itaque quamquam bonorum auctoritas imperitae multitudini uideatur esse salubrior, ratio uero aptior eruditius*. CCL 29. 122. See also *ord.* 2.5.15, where Augustine notes that those who are too busy to think spiritually or who are slow in understanding can still reach spiritual truth in the security of faith in Christ through the Christian mysteries. Also in this connection, it is interesting to note H. Chadwick's comment on Victorinus (*Confessions* (1991), 134 n. 3): 'After conversion in his seventies, his writings on Christian theology tend to present the faith as a kind of Platonism for the masses'. Augustine certainly knew of Victorinus (*cf. conf.* 8.2.3-8.5.10). For more discussion on this passage and on Simplicianus' and Victorinus' significance for Augustine's view of the church and baptism generally, see ch. 2, p. 33f. Ambrose also may have reinforced the idea that Christianity held specific places and hope for both the simple and the learned, J. Patout Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 376.

¹⁶² the door opened to the spiritual realm, as it were; *cf.* n. 158 and *Acad.* 3.20.43.

¹⁶³ despite the fact that Augustine's background with the Manichees included experience of a two-level hierarchical 'communion', the Manichaean influence does not appear to be a factor in Augustine's view expressed in the *Dialogues*. The clearest influence in this regard is neo-Platonism (*cf.* J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (1954), 142).

¹⁶⁴ *i.e.* a community like the one at Cassiciacum.

establishment. Such links (*e.g.* Ambrose, or corporate worship) are suggested at different points, but no more than suggested. However, the picture generated by the *Dialogues* is almost certainly representative of Augustine's view of the church at the time. He had experienced major changes and the stimulation of new discoveries in the previous year and months leading up to Cassiciacum, and Catholic Christianity was at the center of these quite personal developments. Yet, Augustine's task of trying to draw together the various Christian elements from his time at Milan up to 386 was very much in its initial phases at Cassiciacum, even if a Christian foundation was already apparent.¹⁶⁵ In essence, Augustine's Christian understanding at Cassiciacum was individualistic¹⁶⁶ and due primarily to his own synthesis of information from his time in the neo-Platonic Christian circles and the church at Milan, from his own reading of scripture, and from his initial pursuits of a religious philosophic life.

The *Dialogues* do suggest, however, that Augustine considered himself to be in preparation for baptism and entrance into the Christian mysteries and sacraments of the church. Moreover, there are indications that baptism was understood as somehow necessary for purification.¹⁶⁷ In this connection, it may also be justified to assert that as he thought about the church Augustine saw it as the primary home of the authority of Christ.¹⁶⁸ As such, it offered salvific instruction and initiation for all people. Even if he held such a view, however, Augustine probably felt that for some (such as himself) the church's role of instruction is of short duration, *i.e.* that necessary to bring one into a spiritual relationship with God through the cleansing, example, and authority of Christ incarnate. Moreover, significant communal elements (*e.g.* spiritual teaching; intimate, separated community, etc.) were present at Cassiciacum, even if there was not yet an ecclesial framework for them. Augustine was becoming familiar with Christian practice and saw scripture study, prayer, and worship as integral to the philosophic life. His consolidation of an ascetic lifestyle, understood increasingly in Christian terms, would mark a major shift in his relation to the church and larger Christian community. However, as he headed from Cassiciacum to Milan, such a development lay in the future. Beyond his possible preparation for baptism, the extent of the connection

¹⁶⁵ G. Madec, 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin', *Augustinus-Forschung* (1989), 20-21; *cf. Acad.* 3.20.43.

¹⁶⁶ even his Christian terminology seems to suggest this; *e.g.* he used *christus* at Cassiciacum on a number of occasions, but *christianus* did not occur until 387/388 in *mor. ecc.* (*cf.* Appendix B, Table 10 and p. 297-298, for more details).

¹⁶⁷ spiritual purification (allowing the ascent to God) as much as moral or corporeal (*cf. conf.* 9.4.12).

¹⁶⁸ *i.e.* the home of such learned men as Ambrose, Victorinus, and Simplicianus; the repository of the scriptures and the sacred Christian mysteries (rites and religion); and the source of people whose lives contained admirable examples of the restraint, understanding, and priorities that should flow from a right understanding of 'God and the soul'.

between his practice of life and the institution of the church at this point is unclear. Certainly any idea that ecclesiology was important to one's whole spiritual outlook or of the necessity of regular involvement in the church¹⁶⁹ is absent. Yet, a primary link to the 'church' remains with the influence of Ambrose. It is this link, in the intimate context of catechesis and baptism after the return from Cassiciacum to Milan, that would spark some ecclesiological ideas and increased interest in the institutional church in and after 387.

¹⁶⁹ or even the broader Christian community as such.

CHAPTER TWO

AUGUSTINE'S EXPOSURE TO THE CHURCH AT MILAN, 387

INTRODUCTION

On the night of April 24-25, 387, Augustine was baptized into the Catholic church in Milan by bishop Ambrose.¹ Following his 'conversion' to Christianity² and retirement as professor of rhetoric at Milan in 386,³ Augustine had gone in retreat to Cassiciacum, with his friends and dependents in conjunction with the commencement of the 'Vintage Vacation' (22 August-15 October). From there, he returned to Milan approximately three months⁴ before the Easter vigil to prepare for baptism. Having become a catechumen of the church in 384, at least partially in conformity with social activity around the court in Milan,⁵ in 387, Augustine embraced the Christian faith wholeheartedly with conviction *and* commitment. He embraced it personally, as that which alone could free him of his sinful flesh⁶ enabling him to see God,⁷ and corporately, as a member of the communion of the Catholic church (signified by his application for baptism).⁸ Baptism marked his official entrance into the church. He now entered the

¹ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 142; and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 107. Augustine alludes to his intention toward baptism in *ord.* 2.9.27 and records his preparation and the event itself in *conf.* 9.5.13-9.6.14.

² in August of 386. O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 430, places it at the beginning of the month; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 74, assigns it to the end.

³ according to the *Confessions* (9.5.13), it was only at the end of the retreat at Cassiciacum that Augustine's 'resignation took effect'; and he 'notified the people at Milan that they should provide another salesman of words for their pupils' (*Renuntiaui peractis uindemialibus ut scholasticis suis Mediolanenses uenditorem uerborum alium prouiderent*, O'Donnell, v. 1. 108; CCL 27. 140). But the 'day ... when I was actually liberated from the profession of rhetor ... became reality' (*conf.* 9.4.7) at the beginning of the vacation, just before he left for Cassiciacum (*Et uenit dies quo etiam actu soluerer a professione rhetorica, ... et factum est.* O'Donnell v. 1. 105; CCL 27. 136); cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 81.

⁴ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432, places the return to Milan in January/February of 387 and should be preferred over Brown's (*Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 74) opinion of 'early March'.

⁵ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 81.

⁶ cf. *Acad.* 3.19.42; *conf.* 7.20.26; 8.7.16-8.12.29.

⁷ *beata u.* 1.4; *sol.* 2.6.12; *lib. arb.* 2.37; cf. ch. 1 n. 134.

⁸ *conf.* 9.5.13; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 106.

number of the Catholic *fideles*, communicant members committed to serving God.⁹ Following his baptism and the Easter season, Augustine did not remain long in Milan. He and his companions¹⁰ resolved to live in the service of God together and to return to Africa.¹¹ Therefore, during the next year or so, beginning in the summer of 387, Augustine traveled from Milan back to his home in North Africa – Thagaste. The journey was hindered by the unexpected death of his mother Monnica at Ostia¹² and the turbulent political situation surrounding the usurper Maximus' blockade and invasion of Italy.¹³ Consequently, Augustine traveled from Milan to Ostia briefly via Rome in the summer of 387, spent the autumn in the port city, and then traveled back to Rome during the winter (387/388). There he stayed until late August/early September, 388, when he was finally able to travel to Thagaste by way of Carthage.¹⁴

Therefore, this and the following chapter trace Augustine's understanding of the church between the 'baptismal' period at Milan and his return to Thagaste, specifically, how Augustine's ecclesial ideas and his view of his role in the 'church' developed during this period. The fact that Augustine put himself forward for baptism (entrance into the ecclesiastical communion) and the fact that the process of initiation itself emphasized the significant role of the church in God's salvific plan and the ongoing development of believers suggest that Augustine might well have entered an ecclesial phase as he emerged from the period at Milan in 387. As previously examined in chapter one, however, the works produced at Cassiciacum show that, although he was anticipating baptism,¹⁵ Augustine's initial Christian life was not oriented towards the church in theory or in practice. Instead, life at Cassiciacum centered upon the community's attempt (together and as individuals) to pursue a truly 'philosophic life' which held to the authority of Christianity (*i.e.* of Christ, the scriptures, and the sacred Christian 'mysteries').¹⁶ The goal was to understand the one truth of both reason and

⁹ see *e.g.* 'fidelis factus' of Verecundus' wife in *conf.* 9.3.5, and the portrayal of Ponticianus in *conf.* 8.6.14 as devout in his state as a 'baptized believer' (H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 142): *fidelis christianus quippe et fidelis erat, et saepe tibi, deo nostro, prosternebatur in ecclesia crebris et diuturnis orationibus*. O'Donnell v. 1. 94; CCL 27. 122. J.J. O'Donnell discusses *fidelis* in *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 121-123: 'Augustine's use of this word ... strongly suggests that he means it particularly to mean "full, sacramental member of the Christian community"' (p. 121); and lists the uses found in the *Confessions* (p. 122-123).

¹⁰ for more discussion on Augustine's contacts and close associates at Milan and those persons who traveled with him back to Africa, see ch. 3, p. 66-67.

¹¹ *conf.* 9.8.17.

¹² discussed in *conf.* 9.11.27-9.13.37.

¹³ see details in G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21968), 104-105; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 128; and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 115.

¹⁴ see O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 145-149 and 432-433, for details and an outline of these travels.

¹⁵ *e.g.* *ord.* 2.9.27; *cf.* ch. 1, p. 16-17.

¹⁶ *cf.* *Acad.* 3.6.13; *beata u.* 1.4.

authority.¹⁷ No real thought about or need for involvement in the church was apparent. However, to Nebridius (an African friend of Augustine's at Milan during this period), the community which Augustine later established upon his arrival at Thagaste in 388 (which some scholars argue constituted a monastery)¹⁸ was also a 'community of philosophers'.¹⁹ Augustine's own recorded motive for traveling from Thagaste to Hippo in 391 to look for a place to 'establish a monastery' (s. 355.1.2)²⁰ *prima facie* renders the commonly supposed 'monastic' status of Thagaste at least somewhat questionable.²¹ Moreover, there is no direct evidence that Augustine attended Catholic services or worshipped in the church between Milan and Thagaste (or indeed, until 391).²² Thus, one might question any real progress in Augustine's thought about or actions relative to the church between his retreat at Cassiciacum and his commencement of communal life again in Thagaste. Chapter one concluded from the *Dialogues* that Augustine might simply continue to pursue the ideal of a Christian philosophic community after having secured the cleansing authority of Christianity for himself – by faith in Christ²³ and by receiving baptism.²⁴ The *Confessions* indicates that a new ideal of 'serving God' was adopted as Augustine and his companions left Milan.²⁵ Yet, the idea of 'serving God' did not necessarily involve an ecclesial connection.

In fact, the period between Augustine's return to Milan and the establishment of a community at Thagaste did witness the emergence of his thought about the church²⁶ (though nothing yet like an ecclesiology). The explanation of this fact, however, is not

¹⁷ *Acad.* 1.1.3. This often took the form of philosophizing in groups or alone in neo-Platonic fashion (cf. *beata u.* 6.23 and *ord.* 1.3.6), or of sharpening one's mind by practice in the liberal arts.

¹⁸ esp. G.P. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (1987), 45-58.

¹⁹ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 133, who cites in support *ep.* 6 (to Augustine from Nebridius, who had moved back to North Africa as well, but to Carthage not Thagaste): 'It pleases me very greatly to keep (preserve) your letters as my own eyes. ... Some will speak to me of Christ, some of Plato, some of Plotinus' (*Epistulas tuas perplacet ita seruare ut oculos meos. sunt enim probationes. illae mihi Christum, illae Platonem, illae Plotinum sonabunt.* CSEL 34.2. 11-12).

²⁰ *Quaerebam ubi constituerem monasterium, et uiuerem cum fratribus meis.* PL 39. 1569.

²¹ the question of the 'monastic' status of the Thagaste community will be considered in much greater detail in ch. 4 and 5.

²² E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 132. Reasons to think that he remained at least occasionally involved in the corporate liturgy, however, will be discussed in ch. 3, 4, and 5.

²³ cf. ch. 1, p. 5 and 12 (esp. n. 81).

²⁴ ch. 1, p. 15-17 and 25-26.

²⁵ *conf.* 9.8.17. L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 49f.; and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), ch. 13, 132f., have discussed the concept of *serui dei*; see my discussions in ch. 4, p. 175-180, and Appendix B, Table 14 and p. 308-309. The earliest usage in Augustine's writings of these two terms in conjunction indicates a *concept* of serving God as opposed to the *designation* of a recognizable position (e.g. one encounters *seruo/-ire* but not *seruus/-i* in conjunction with *deus/-i*). It also appears to be based on the reading of scripture.

²⁶ if nothing else Augustine at least began to mention and refer to the 'church' during this time.

straightforward. Clearly, there is need for a close analysis of Augustine's works²⁷ and context to discern the nature and development of his ideas about the church as he proceeded back to Africa. In the first case, it will be seen that the stay at Milan for baptism was more significant than has been credited. This significance was largely on account of Augustine's 'ecclesiological baptism' there, his first exposure to concentrated Catholic instruction and ritual observance with all its thematic and symbolic ecclesial foci. However, this conclusion in particular is not arrived at simply. In this chapter, the complex issues involved will require that what is known directly concerning the stay at Milan be discussed chronologically and contextually. Augustine's works from Milan, and what is known about the process of Christian initiation there, will be investigated.

Ecclesiological ideas, such as the idea of the church as a place of saving instruction, and stimuli, such as the experience of the baptismal rights or the discovery of Catholic ascetic communities at Rome, sparked Augustine's thought about the church and were intertwined with his personal and communal development during 387-388. In the period following his baptism, Augustine first mentioned and discussed the church as he encountered and considered many ecclesiological significant influences and ideas. In his works from Rome (387/388), Augustine was particularly interested in the church as protective teacher, the healing mother of all believers, and universal communion of all believers. Events during the return to North Africa only allowed him to respond selectively to such aspects. Only when settled at Thagaste was Augustine really able to process them and eventually consolidate his view of the church. Still, the beginning of the extended emergence of his first coherent ecclesial understanding seems to have started at Milan in 387. The following discussion will investigate this period.

THE RETURN TO MILAN

Due to the nature of the evidence from the *Dialogues* and the paucity of textual evidence from 387 in Milan, it is difficult to know the precise state of mind Augustine was in when he returned to the imperial city from Cassiciacum. A complete understanding of his motivation for baptism, for example, does not seem possible on the evidence available.²⁸ Still it is clear that he returned to Milan with a program of 'true philosophy', striving after rational wisdom and understanding that would bring him

²⁷ esp. those composed in Milan and Rome, as well as background insights from later works like the *Confessions*.

²⁸ though see below, p. 33f., for a possible conceptualization.

closer to truth about God and the soul.²⁹ One subset of this program was his liberal arts project.³⁰ From his new intellectual and 'spiritual' position, he decided to write a series of 'textbooks' on the liberal arts which would comprise books on: grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, geometry, arithmetic, and philosophy.³¹

Following his conversion, Augustine 'seems to have thought that the liberal arts could be useful in training the mind to conceive of the incorporeal and hence of God'.³² In his *Review* (1.6, *CCL*), Augustine wrote about this project:

At the same time that I was about to receive baptism in Milan, I also undertook to write books on the liberal disciplines, questioning those who were with me and who were not averse to studies of this kind ... desiring to reach and lead to incorporeal things through corporeal things, as if by distinct steps.³³

Of these books, *On Music* survives intact. However, *On Grammar* – which according to the *Review* was apparently completed but lost by Augustine³⁴ – and the beginnings

²⁹ at Cassiciacum, Augustine stated that the concerns of philosophy are 'God and the soul' (cf. ch. 1 n. 14), but over the course of the next several years, the importance of the relation of truth about God and the soul to life in this world, and 'a more positive appreciation of the created temporal realm' generally, increased in importance significantly (C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 10-11 and 40). For discussion of Augustine's philosophic 'program', see ch. 1, p. 17-20. The manner of life was coherent; G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* (1992), 775, states that 'The dialogues portray a way of life, one already achieved in part, but yet fully to be realized'.

³⁰ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 126. It is interesting to note how the emphasis on the liberal arts had diminished by the time of the writing of the *Confessions* where 'there is not one word about' them; P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 216.

³¹ *retr.* 1.6. The most comprehensive study relating to these works remains H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et le fin de la culture antique* (1938), 187-327. More recently, J.J. O'Donnell, in his 'Excursus: The *Liberales Disciplinae*' in *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 269-278; and C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), e.g. 24-31, have made quite significant contributions to this aspect of Augustine's work.

³² B.D. Jackson, *Augustine: De Dialectica*, *Synthese Historical Library* v. 16 (1975), 3; cf. *ord.* 1.8.24. For synopses of Augustine's '*Disciplinarum libri*' see Jackson (1-3) and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 269-278 (see also 266). O'Donnell (p. 269) urges us not to forget the 'sense of [the] mystical dimension' in late antique education, 'the way in which the training of the mind according to the *enkyklios paideia*, was meant to bring about enlightenment'. See also his suggestive comment that 'he [Augustine] sees the ascent of the mind to God that these '*disciplinae*' make possible as closely related to the other union with God that his impending baptism will forge. Cult and culture are drawn intimately together' (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275). For more discussion of the significance of these books, see below p. 45-46.

³³ *Per idem tempus, quo Mediolani fui baptismum percepturus, etiam disciplinarum libros conatus sum scribere, interrogans eos qui mecum erant atque ab huiusmodi studiis non abhorrebant, per corporalia cupiens ad incorporalia quibusdam quasi passibus certis uel peruenire uel ducere.* *CCL* 57. 17. After brief comments on *De musica*, Augustine continued, 'But from [work on] the five other disciplines similarly begun there: dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, philosophy; only the beginnings remained, and even them I lost. I think they are in the hands of some others' (*De aliis uero quinque disciplinis illic similiter inchoatis – de dialectica, de rethorica, de geometrica, de arithmetica, de philosophia – sola principia remanserunt, quae tamen etiam ipsa perdidimus; sed haberi ab aliquibus existimo*); cf. also *retr.* 1.11 for comments specifically on *mus.* Since the *CCL* text is employed throughout as the most recent, its numbering of citations from the *retr.* is followed – which treats the comments on the *libri disciplinarum* following the discussion of *imm. an.* in the *retr.* as a distinct entry (i.e. as *retr.* 1.6).

³⁴ the general consensus seems to remain convinced of this, though V.A. Law has argued (in 'St. Augustine's "De grammatica": Lost or Found?', *Rech. Aug.* 19 (1984), 155-183) that the *Ars*

of *On Dialectic*³⁵ may also be extant. For O'Donnell, what is 'most important' to remember in evaluating Augustine's liberal arts project is that

there is no reason to think that these ideas about the liberal disciplines were in any essential way incompatible with the practice and belief of Christianity in Augustine's time. Though he himself moved beyond them, that is at least in part because he believed that those ideas about the *disciplinae* were assimilated into and made less urgently necessary by the *disciplina ecclesiae*.³⁶

O'Donnell's affirmation of the natural compatibility of the disciplines with Christianity is certainly germane.³⁷ Augustine's literary enterprise at Milan (including work *On the Immortality of the Soul* as well as on the liberal arts) was undertaken as a natural part of a *beata uita* based on the authority of Christ and pursued with the insights of the neo-Platonists.³⁸ One example of the link between Augustine's Christian orientation and his liberal arts program is the fact that *On Music* (books 1-5) employs part of Ambrose's '*Deus creator omnium*'³⁹ as the basis for its analysis of rhythm.⁴⁰ Thus, the liberal arts project represents Augustine's optimism that the combined authority of Christianity and reason of neo-Platonism could enable minds properly trained and educated to see God and live spiritually. In the busy ecclesiastical context surrounding baptism, the project also reflects Augustine's commitment to a continued life of *otium*.

The authority of Christianity had given Augustine access to spiritual truth and he believed that neo-Platonism provided the avenue for understanding this truth.⁴¹ The liberal disciplines were one tool that helped the mind reach this objective of

Augustini pro fratrum mediocritate breuiata, the shorter of the two supposed recensions of *De grammatica*, on linguistic grounds could be the 'missing' work from Augustine (see esp. p. 183). More work is required, but I am of the opinion that until Law's arguments are contradicted *De grammatica* should be considered to be provisionally 'found' in the *Ars breuiata*. Unfortunately, it does not add anything in content to an investigation of Augustine's early view of the church.

³⁵ for arguments for the authenticity of *De dialectica*, see B.D. Jackson, *De Dialectica* (1975). J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275) is hesitant about these arguments (and those of V. Law) but only refers to U. Pizzani, *Atti* v. 1 (1986), 348-54, for a 'measured discussion'. Jackson's view is accepted by J.J. O'Meara, 'Reviews', *Aug. Stud.* 6 (1975), 207, who feels his arguments are 'as near convincing as possible'. My view of Jackson's argument, i.e. provisional acceptance, is the same as that of Law's on *gramm.* (see n. 34); unfortunately, so is my evaluation of the lack of relevance of *dial.* to this study. The only other candidate for survival is *De rhetorica*. Jackson, sensitive to the biases which can operate against spurious works, nevertheless states that 'There seem to be few reasons for accepting the *De rhetorica* as authentic' (p. 31 n. 17, giving details and citing a number of sources, most recently H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et le fin de la culture antique* (41958), p. 578).

³⁶ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 271.

³⁷ the latter part of the quote runs ahead of this discussion; see esp. the comments on *mus.* in ch. 5.

³⁸ cf. *ord.* 1.8.24 and *Acad.* 3.20.43.

³⁹ often cited by Augustine, cf. *conf.* 6.4.10; 9.12.32; 10.34.52; and *mus.* 6.23 and *passim*. See F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 296. For text, translation, and notes by M. Perrin, see Hymn 4: «Deus creator omnium» in J. Fontaine, ed., *Ambroise de Milan. Hymnes* (1992), 229-261.

⁴⁰ C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 27, has discussed the significance of rhythm in *ord.* (esp. 2.39-41) in connection with poetry. 'Poetry as rhythmical', she says, through 'numerically proportioned feet is given a place ... as rational and as leading the man who studies it to the rationality which gave it structure'.

⁴¹ *Acad.* 3.20.43.

comprehension. The young Christian Augustine saw himself as one of those who was able, endowed with the ability and education, to understand and not just believe authority.⁴² He came back to Milan in 387 committed to seeking true spiritual knowledge and to the practice of dialogue in community (in the classical tradition of philosophic *otium*) as one valuable means of achieving understanding.⁴³ Therefore, the study of the liberal arts as well as Christian scriptures and writings was necessary for increased understanding. He also returned from Cassiciacum committed to the fact that the basis of true understanding was Christian authority – an authority inextricably linked with the person and work of Christ as well as the Catholic Christian scriptures and ‘mysteries’.⁴⁴ And finally, Augustine arrived back in Milan convinced that the pursuit of the religious life (*i.e.* one of prayer, praise, scripture study, and godly restraint and priorities – though to talk of ‘regular’ asceticism here would be premature) as well as philosophical contemplation⁴⁵ were necessary and the natural result of his new intellectual and spiritual position. However, the recorded motivation for the return to Milan, the need for baptism,⁴⁶ must not be forgotten. Ultimately, the success of the elements of the ‘happy life’ of ‘true philosophy’ was in some way conditional upon his baptism.

Augustine's understanding of baptism and its relationship to conversion⁴⁷ was probably derived in part from what he had heard about Victorinus. Victorinus was a famous rhetorician of African origin who had found success in Italy during the middle of the fourth century.⁴⁸ In the *Confessions*, an account⁴⁹ of his conversion to Christianity is presented by Simplicianus⁵⁰ as an example in answer to Augustine's

⁴² indeed, Augustine's comprehension and use of philosophy and the liberal disciplines to gain spiritual understanding stands in stark contrast to those he describes in the *Dialogues* (see *e.g.* *ord.* 2.9.26) and, during this period, in *mus.* (*e.g.* 1.4.5; 1.4.9; 6.1.1) who did not value philosophy or the liberal arts. J.J. O'Donnell comments suggestively that Augustine ‘sees the ascent of the mind to God that these [liberal] “*disciplinae*” make possible as closely related to the other union with God that his impending baptism will forge. Cult and culture are drawn intimately together’ (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275).

⁴³ the use of the dialogue form of his Cassiciacum writings was continued during this period in *quant.*, and later in *mag. – imm. an.* also may have been put into dialogue form had it been completed.

⁴⁴ see ch. 1, particularly p. 5, 11–15, and n. 82, 83, and 86.

⁴⁵ on ‘God and the soul’, *cf. ord.* 2.18.47 or *sol.* 1.2.7.

⁴⁶ *conf.* 9.6.14, *cf.* 9.4.12.

⁴⁷ Augustine could have taken the route of many Christians and remained a catechumen of the Catholic church, leaving baptism till toward the end of life; *cf.* J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 21.

⁴⁸ see *Encyclopedia*, Ferguson (1990), 927; and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 13–15, for general information. For ‘The neo-Platonism of Marius Victorinus’, see P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1963), 69–74.

⁴⁹ *conf.* 8.2.3–8.2.5 and 8.4.9–8.5.10.

⁵⁰ who had known the great rhetor personally, though how intimately is unclear; *cf. conf.* 8.2.3 and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 16.

desire for advice.⁵¹ Augustine must have known of Victorinus at least by the time he was first in Rome (384) if not before. Probably, he had heard either at Rome or early at Milan that 'Victorinus died as a Christian' (*conf.* 8.2.3).⁵² Whether or not the account Augustine gave in the *Confessions* corresponds exactly to what Simplicianus told him, or to one or several conversations, about Victorinus is not crucial.⁵³ Simplicianus did present Augustine with information about the famous rhetorician⁵⁴ and it was probably influential at the time,⁵⁵ as it is in the *Confessions* narrative.⁵⁶ O'Donnell has rightly warned that 'The episode is so useful for [the] purposes [of creating parallels to Augustine's development and preparing the reader for Augustine's conversion to come] that we must be careful not to assume that we have anything like a full account of any conversation Augustine actually had with Simplicianus'.⁵⁷ In understanding this, a difference exists between treating the text as essentially historically reliable in its information and treating it as a direct record of a conversation.⁵⁸ Just as the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*, which are stylized presentations following an external literary structure, provide an accurate (if not complete) picture of life and interaction in the fall and winter of 386/387, the stylized presentation of the Victorinus 'testimony' can give information about significant input from Simplicianus to Augustine at Milan.⁵⁹ As long as it is recognized that the words of the *Confessions* were presented with narrative intentions, they can be considered to accurately reflect the types of comments Simplicianus would have made to Augustine. Thus, since the *Confessions* record provides a possible source of information into the way in which Augustine may have approached initiation into the ecclesiastical communion, an investigation into the details of Victorinus' influence will be of value.

⁵¹ *conf.* 8.1.1; which passage also illuminates the attraction of Simplicianus for Augustine.

⁵² *Victorinus ... quem christianum defunctum esse audieram.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 89; CCL 27. 114.

⁵³ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 13, raises questions on both points (*cf.* P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1963), 69). There are no indications of this exchange in the *Dialogues* or the works written at Milan, but none would really be expected. No basis on which to doubt the *Confessions*' account exists except the normal caution that the comments there are fulfilling rhetorical objectives and are from (Christian) hindsight.

⁵⁴ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 12.

⁵⁵ G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 88.

⁵⁶ *e.g. conf.* 8.5.10: 'As soon as your servant Simplicianus told me this story about Victorinus, I was ardent to follow his example. He had indeed told it to me with this object in view' (*Sed ubi mihi homo tuus Simplicianus de Victorino ista narrauit, exarsi ad imitandum: ad hoc enim et ille narrauerat.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 92; CCL 27. 119).

⁵⁷ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 12.

⁵⁸ the notes pick out those elements which may not correspond (in kind) to Milan.

⁵⁹ this input about Victorinus did not translate into enduring influence, however. J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 15) has observed the 'lack of quotation or otherwise direct use anywhere in Augustine's canon, of any of Victorinus' theological works', even his commentary on Paul's epistles which 'surely ... would have been apposite at the moment Augustine was encountering Simplicianus'. Regardless, the suggestion being made in the text is for the specific period from the discussion(s) with Simplicianus until March 387 and in connection with the specific issue of baptism.

The Victorinus 'story' is one of three testimonies which lead up to the garden conversion scene in book eight of the *Confessions*.⁶⁰ As opposed to the other two (one about Antony,⁶¹ whom Augustine no doubt would have respected although he was never to be attracted to an eremitic or extreme asceticism,⁶² and another about the legal clerks at Trier, who adopted an ascetic life upon reading about Antony),⁶³ in Victorinus Augustine heard of someone whom he could (and did) aspire to emulate. If he had not beforehand, Augustine came to know from Simplicianus that Victorinus was 'extremely learned and most expert in all the liberal disciplines' and 'had read and assessed many philosophers' ideas' (*conf.* 8.2.3)⁶⁴ – achievements Augustine would still have aimed at in the spring of 387. He would have admired the credentials of high culture and intellect, but what inspired him was their use in the search for truth. Following upon the praise of Victorinus in the *Confessions*, one reads, 'Yet he was not ashamed to become the *servant of your Christ*, and an infant born at your font, to *bow his head to the yoke of humility* and *submit his forehead to the reproach of the cross*'⁶⁵ (italics mine).⁶⁶ Throughout the passage about Victorinus, the contrast is drawn between pride and humility as a model for the tension Augustine was facing and the decisions he would have to make. It is difficult to tell if anything approaching this view of pride and humility was actually present in 387. However, it certainly is of probable value for understanding some of Augustine's attitudes and actions, especially with regard to his baptism, in Milan. Specifically, since the account about Victorinus' baptism establishes a contrast between pride and humility in its portrayal of initiation (see discussion following); and since Augustine's own sensitivity to pride and humility is well known, it is possible that he viewed his baptism in light of this contrast.

Hence, if Augustine's celebrated view of pride as the primary sin⁶⁷ was present at Milan, then this passage might suggest that to turn from sin would require humility

⁶⁰ see P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1963), 69-74.

⁶¹ cf. *conf.* 8.6.14 and 8.12.29.

⁶² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (1978), 238; cf. *mor. ecc.* 23.43. On *conf.* 10.43.70: 'Terrified by my sins and the pile of my misery, I had racked my heart and had meditated taking flight to live in solitude', H. Chadwick (*Confessions* (1991), 220 n. 45) states, 'Perhaps because of the influence of Athanasius' *Life of Antony* above, VIII.vi (14). This text is unique evidence of Augustine's aspiration to be a hermit'. The passage itself, however, makes clear that this was a passing thought, indeed, one dispelled by God.

⁶³ both related by Ponticianus, *conf.* 8.6.14-8.6.15. While the general effect of Ponticianus' revelation is undoubted, the element of chastisement which Augustine felt probably stung him most (cf. *conf.* 8.7.18 and 8.8.19).

⁶⁴ ... *quemadmodum ille doctissimus senex et omnium liberalium doctrinarum peritissimus quique philosophorum tam multa legerat et diiudicauerat*. O'Donnell, v. 1. 89; CCL 27. 114.

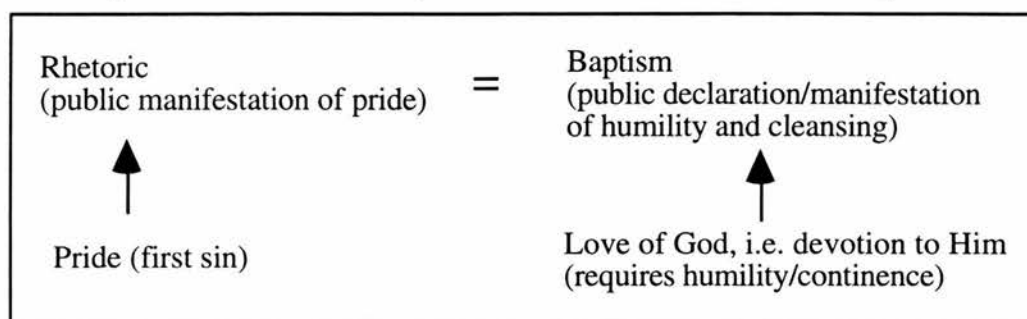
⁶⁵ i.e. the sign of the cross on the forehead at baptism; H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 135 n. 6.

⁶⁶ ... *non erubuerit esse puer Christi tui et infans fontis tui, subiecto collo ad humilitatis iugum et edomita fronte ad crucis opprobrium*. O'Donnell, v. 1. 89; CCL 27. 115.

⁶⁷ e.g. *ciu.* 14.13; *Gn. litt.* 11.15.19 (cf. 11.16.21). See also the sophisticated comments of J. Burnaby, *Amor Dei* (1960), esp. 189 (cf. 120).

(e.g. through submission). In fact, the passage portrays rhetoric as the public 'arch-action' of pride.⁶⁸ Augustine may have thought that one necessary step for receiving Christ's cleansing was to identify with his humility.⁶⁹ Combined with the Victorinus testimony, this might imply that the primary motivation for baptism was to make a public declaration/act of humility. Augustine may have understood such a motivation with the following 'models' (cf. the conversion 'narratives' of both Victorinus and Augustine in the *Confessions*):

Diagram 1: Parallels around baptism in the Victorinus narrative of the *Confessions*



The parallel of rhetoric (public pride) with baptism (public humility) in the model reflects the deeper antithesis between pride (representing sin generally), which leads away from God, and love of God, which entails movement towards him.

Such a representative picture could have been easily adopted by Augustine. In *Confessions* 8.2.3, Simplicianus, after congratulating Augustine on the reading of 'Platonist' philosophers and not others and mentioning that 'God and his Word' keep cropping up in 'Platonic' books, 'to exhort me to the humility of Christ hidden from the wise and revealed to babes (Mt. 11.25) ... recalled his memory of Victorinus himself, whom he had known intimately at Rome'.⁷⁰ It is impossible to know if this 'exhortation to humility' was given as such by Simplicianus. Still, an examination of the account suggests that the 'exhortation' (or obligation) might well have been presented to Augustine *or* that at Milan Augustine consciously understood himself to have received such.⁷¹ Either way, the elements which he grasped would have provided him with a mental picture of what he was to do and experience in baptism later in 387.

⁶⁸ esp. *conf.* 8.2.5; cf. *conf.* 8.2.3-4. When Victorinus submitted to the church, the associates he left are simply called 'the proud' (*superbi*).

⁶⁹ cf. e.g. Augustine's later *diu. qu.* 69.9 (esp. *ad fin.*), and the discussion in ch. 3 following.

⁷⁰ *ubi autem commemoravi legisse me quosdam libros platoniorum, quos Victorinus, quondam rhetor urbis Romae ... in latinam linguam transtulisset, gratulatus est mihi quod non in aliorum philosophorum scripta incidissem plena fallaciarum et deceptionum secundum elementa huius mundi, in istis autem omnibus modis insinuari deum et eius uerbum. deinde, ut me exhortaretur ad humilitatem Christi sapientibus absconditam et reuelatam paruulis, Victorinum ipsum recordatus est, quem Romae cum esset familiarissime nouerat.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 89; CCL 27. 114-115.

⁷¹ among the elements of the conversions described in the *Confessions* which F. Van Fletern lists in 'St. Augustine's Theory of Conversion', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), is the 'Contrast between

First, Augustine heard from Simplicianus that God had been able to open even a highly educated, philosophic, and pagan heart. The means described for this process are simple: 'Simplicianus said Victorinus read holy scripture, and all the Christian books he investigated with special care' (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁷² Commenting on Augustine's rhetorical question about the opening of Victorinus' heart, O'Donnell writes,

The question answers itself. How did God insinuate himself into the heart of Victorinus? By apostolic preaching and by the moral purification that results in confession of sin. This confirms the scheme of presentation here; Victorinus is being adduced not simply as a parallel for Platonic intellectual difficulties on the threshold of the church, but as parallel as well for the moral choice that Augustine thought must accompany entry [to the church].⁷³

Augustine would have viewed Victorinus as a model for how one must come to the church. The parallels between the presentation of Victorinus and the record of Augustine's steps toward conversion and the church in the *Confessions* are obvious.⁷⁴ But there may be even more than this. On a subtler level, the passage seems to present Victorinus as a 'parallel' for the reason a believer in Christ needed to enter the church at all. As the 'testimony' continues, Simplicianus lays out a series of questions about Christianity and the church against the background of Victorinus' reading of Christian texts and conviction of pride. After he had digested the Christian writings, Victorinus said, 'Did you know I am already a Christian?' (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁷⁵ To this Simplicianus replied, 'I shall not believe that nor shall I count you among the Christians unless I see you in the church of Christ'. Victorinus' rejoinder is important: 'Do walls make Christians?' In essence, Victorinus' response re-iterated the claim, 'I am a Christian already'.⁷⁶ The question being raised is what the church has to do with being a Christian. No further answer is provided by Simplicianus, and he seems content to

pride and humility, the learned and the unlearned' (number 13, p. 71). In this connection, he notes that 'The theme of the worldly contrasted with the humble is explicitly seen in the conversion of Victorinus'. J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 413), in his discussion of the 'reading of the *platinicorum libri*' (which he states 'has been the focus of every debate in the present century over the meaning of Augustine's intellectual autobiography'), writes that in discussing the 'central' importance of the books 'we mistake Augustine's drift in a crucial way. What he is attempting to describe is an encounter between his haughty intellect and the humbling grace of God, an encounter in which the books on the table were instruments not in themselves indispensable'.

⁷² this corresponds to Augustine's reading of Paul (*cf.* *Acad.* 2.2.5; *conf.* 7.21.27 and 8.6.14). *O domine, domine, qui inclinasti caelos et descendisti, tetigisti montes et fumigauerunt, quibus modis te insinuasti illi pectori? legebat, sicut ait Simplicianus, sanctam scripturam omnesque christianas litteras inuestigabat studiosissime et perscrutabatur.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 89; CCL 27. 115.

⁷³ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 20-21.

⁷⁴ *cf.* J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 12.

⁷⁵ ... *et dicebat Simpliciano, non palam sed secretius et familiaris, 'noueris me iam esse christianum.' et respondebat ille, 'non credam nec deputabo te inter christianos, nisi in ecclesia Christi uidero.' ille autem inridebat dicens, 'ergo parietes faciunt christianos?' et hoc saepe dicebat, iam se esse christianum, et Simplicianus illud saepe respondebat, et saepe ab illo parietum inrisio repetebatur.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 89-90; CCL 27. 115. Following quotes also come from this Latin citation.

⁷⁶ the primary sense; though the precise nuance of this phrase is more subtle. For example, Victorinus' rhetorical repartee may reflect a feeling of being threatened.

leave Victorinus with the stalemate. The *Confessions* continues, 'He frequently used to say "I am a Christian already", and Simplicianus would give the same answer, to which he equally often repeated his joke about walls' (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁷⁷ Simplicianus, along with Christians of his day generally, certainly did not think that walls 'made a church'.⁷⁸ The significant issue for them, and in the *Confessions* passage, was that one needed to be brought into the church and be willing to be brought in.⁷⁹ To really be a Christian one had to be 'in the church of Christ', that is, identified within it.⁸⁰ Thus, the idea that to 'count' oneself 'among the Christians' a person must have been 'counted' into the church seems to be present in Simplicianus' relation to Augustine. This idea constitutes the most likely motivation of Augustine's decision for baptism. Either in the period around, or probably after, his conversion, he grasped the point that the 'church' was in some form integral to Christianity. His understanding of this motivation, of the reason for 'counting' oneself 'in' the church, focused on both humility and ecclesiastical commitment. The acceptance of the Christian gospel (the authority of Christ) was made manifest in the public humility of ecclesiastical commitment and submission.

By the end of his retreat at Cassiciacum,⁸¹ at least, it appears that the aspect of humility was of concern to Augustine.⁸² The *Soliloquies* state,

R. 'Believe in God resolutely. Give yourself over to him as much as you are able. Do not wish for your own will to be yours and at your own disposal; but proclaim yourself his slave – the slave of a merciful and capable master ...'

A. 'I am listening, I believe and in so far as I can, I obey; I pray to him with all my power, that I may be able to do all in my power' (*sol.* 1.15.30).⁸³

Brown, commenting on this passage, says 'It is this abiding fear of the dark [*i.e.* 'the shadows which might stir my pleasure', *sol.* 1.15.30] which drove Augustine to return to Milan to wash away his sins in baptism'.⁸⁴ Although the goal in this is cleansing, the baptismal process was more complex for Augustine. It is a manifestation of the spiritual economy by which cleansing occurred. In the requirements of this process, the idea of public identification with the institutional church is unmistakable

⁷⁷ slightly modified from Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 136.

⁷⁸ see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 21-22, for statement to this effect and examples.

⁷⁹ it should be noted that the passage also contains the issue of sacramental instruction into the Christian 'mysteries' (beyond his earlier Christian reading) which Victorinus is only allowed after his decision to submit to the church. In the narrative at least, however, this was secondary.

⁸⁰ or, in Simplicianus' words, 'seen in it'.

⁸¹ *i.e.* the time immediately before he went to be baptized.

⁸² *cf.* *conf.* 9.6.14.

⁸³ R: *Constanter deo crede eique te totum committe quantum potes. Noli esse uelle quasi proprius et in tua potestate, sed eius clementissimi et utilissimi domini te seruum esse profiteri ...*

A: *Audio, credo et quantum possum obtempero plurimumque ipsum deprecor, ut plurimum possim.* CSEL 89. 44.

⁸⁴ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 123 *ad fin.*-124.

(more in the sense of affiliation than 'membership'). Yet, the need to submit in humility and service to God publicly may well have been the one by which he primarily understood his baptism and 'submission' to ecclesiastical convention (*i.e.* the public humiliation of entry into the church). This sense of humble submission is certainly present in the *Confessions*' record of the baptism of Victorinus.

But [after Victorinus' Christian reading], he began to feel a longing and drank in courage. He was afraid he would be denied by Christ 'before the holy angels' (Luke 12.9). He would have felt guilty of a grave crime if he were ashamed of the sacraments of the humility of your word and were not ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of proud demons whose pride he imitated when he accepted their ceremonies. He became ashamed of the emptiness of those rites and felt respect for the truth (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁸⁵

Intertwined in this passage are both intellectual assent and the step of public humility and identification. Intellectual assent was a necessary but not sufficient step in coming to God. Despite such assent, there remained a necessary step of public humility and identification.⁸⁶

The result of the process described in the *Confessions* was Victorinus' decision of submission. 'Suddenly and unexpectedly he said to Simplicianus (as he told me): "Let us go to the church, I want to become a Christian"' (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁸⁷ Presumably, if this is an actual statement of Victorinus, it corresponds in terms of action to beginning regular attendance at church,⁸⁸ but, most of all, it corresponds to the rites of induction into the church which are described subsequently.⁸⁹ The passage which follows this announcement gives a formula for 'becoming a Christian' that is of interest at least for the parallel being established in the *Confessions* narrative and possibly as a model

⁸⁵ *sed posteaquam legendo et inhiando hausit firmitatem timuitque negari a Christo coram angelis sanctis, si eum timeret coram hominibus confiteri, reusque sibi magni criminis apparuit erubescendo de sacramentis humilitatis uerbi tui et non erubescendo de sacris sacrilegis superbiorum daemoniorum, quae imitator superbus acceperat, depuduit uanitati et erubuit ueritati.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 90; CCL 27. 115-116 (translation slightly modified from Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 136). In J.J. O'Donnell's commentary, he summarizes this passage, saying, 'he was no longer embarrassed when his deeds ran counter to his *vanitas*, and was now embarrassed when they ran counter to *veritas*' (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 22-23).

⁸⁶ see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 31: 'The philosophers and gnostics together share the opinion that right knowledge is the key to salvation; Bk. 8 is Augustine's personal testimony that the will remains to be mastered'. J. Patout Burns, writes: 'Augustine was deeply moved by the example of Marius Victorinus which was recounted by Simplicianus. Although this philosopher and translator of Plotinus had already attained contemplation of Truth, he joined the "lowly" in the church, accepting the rituals which the incarnate Word had established as the means to salvation. Under the influence of Simplicianus' recounting of Victorinus' public profession of faith, Augustine was ready to accept the church's way of life' ('Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 377).

⁸⁷ *subitoque et inopinatus ait Simpliciano, ut ipse narrabat, 'eamus in ecclesiam: christianus uolo fieri'.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 90; CCL 27. 116.

⁸⁸ although it is difficult to tell whether such attendance would have just been for the time necessary to 'receive his first sacraments of instruction' (*conf.* 8.2.4; see n. 91 for Latin).

⁸⁹ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 23: 'Victorinus' "let's go to church" implies his willing submission to the sacramental discipline of the Catholic community'.

which Augustine took up in 386-387. The beginning of Victorinus' initiatory process is described:

Not long after he had received his first sacraments of instruction,⁹⁰ he gave in his name for baptism that he might be reborn, to the amazement of Rome and the joy of the church. The proud 'saw and were angry ...' But the Lord God was the hope of his servant; 'he paid no regard to vanities and lying follies' (Ps. 39.5) (*conf.* 8.2.4).⁹¹

Here, the first two elements of the process emerge:

1. receiving sacraments of instruction; and
2. giving in one's name for baptism.

Augustine mirrored this process. He may have begun receiving sacraments of instruction at Cassiciacum;⁹² but, if not, he certainly did in Milan.⁹³ At the end of his stay at Cassiciacum, Augustine gave in his name for baptism.⁹⁴ The *Confessions* narrative continues as the reception of Victorinus' actions by the people in Rome is presented by Augustine in a contrast between the proud and the (humble) servant of the Lord.⁹⁵

Finally the hour came for [Victorinus] to make the profession of faith which is expressed in set form. At Rome these words are memorized and then by custom recited⁹⁶ from an elevated place before the baptized believers by those who want to come to your grace. Simplicianus used to say⁹⁷ that the presbyters offered him the opportunity of affirming the creed in private, as was their custom to offer to people who felt embarrassed and afraid. But he preferred to make profession of his salvation before the holy congregation. For there was no salvation in the rhetoric he had taught; *yet his profession of that had been public. How much less should he be afraid in proclaiming your word* when he used to feel no fear in using his own words before crowds of frenzied pagans (*italics mine, conf.* 8.2.5).⁹⁸

⁹⁰ with the implication of intellectual agreement and belief. These 'first sacraments of instruction' probably included the initial exorcism of the candidates for baptism and the beginning of catechism (see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 23; and below ch. 3, p. 93f. for preparatory rites). The translation is altered from Chadwick's 'his instructions in the first mysteries' (p. 136).

⁹¹ *ubi autem imbutus est primis instructionis sacramentis, non multo post etiam nomen dedit ut per baptismum regeneraretur, mirante Roma, gaudente ecclesia. superbi uidebant et irascebantur, dentibus suis stridebant et tabescebant. seruo autem tuo dominus deus erat spes eius, et non respiciebat in uanitates et insanias mendaces.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 90; CCL 27. 116. The terminology employed here might be retrospective but there is no reason why Simplicianus could not have used these very words.

⁹² see ch. 1, p. 15-16 (esp. n. 115).

⁹³ *conf.* 9.5.13-9.6.14.

⁹⁴ *conf.* 9.5.13.

⁹⁵ *conf.* 8.2.4 *ad fin.*; again highlighting the seemingly necessary 'public' element in humility and affiliation.

⁹⁶ referring to the *redditio symboli*.

⁹⁷ *dicebat*; indication that there was more than one conversation on this subject?

⁹⁸ *Denique ut uentum est ad horam profitendae fidei, quae uerbis certis conceptis retentisque memoriter de loco eminentiore in conspectu populi fidelis Romae reddi solet ab eis qui accessuri sunt ad gratiam tuam, oblatum esse dicebat Victorino a presbyteris ut secretius redderet, sicut nonnullis qui uerecundia trepidaturi uidebantur offerri mos erat; illum autem maluisse salutem suam in conspectu sanctae multitudinis profiteri. non enim erat salus quam docebat in rhetorica, et tamen eam publice*

The final element in the process of becoming a Christian, according to Simplicianus, emerges:

3. the 'profession of faith ... before the holy congregation'.

Augustine, himself, was to fulfill this and profess his faith before Ambrose and the Milanese *competentes* on the night of the Easter vigil, 387.

One final observation about this passage remains to be made; it concludes with a sensational public image.

When [Victorinus] mounted the steps to affirm the confession of faith, there was a murmur of delighted talk as all the people who knew him spoke his name to one another. And who there did not know him? A suppressed sound came from the lips of all as they rejoiced, 'Victorinus, Victorinus!' As soon as they saw him, they suddenly murmured in exultation and equally suddenly were silent in concentration to hear him. All of them wanted to clasp him to their hearts, and the hands with which they embraced him were their love and joy (*conf.* 8.2.5).⁹⁹

The stage constructed for Victorinus' initiation experience in the *Confessions*, with no direct mention of the waters of baptism, is that of a rhetorical event. The reader knows that the raised platform, the solemn occasion, the expectant crowd,¹⁰⁰ would have been all too familiar to Victorinus. Yet, the *Confessions* concludes not with a triumphal declaration of faith from the great rhetor's mouth, but with silence. The people fall silent almost as if they might not make out his voice.¹⁰¹ Above all, Victorinus remains silent as the passage ends not with his words but rather with a description of how, without any words, the congregation's love and joy embraced him. The contrast between rhetoric (public pride) and Christian confession (public humility) is complete. The *Confessions* does not even proceed to mention Victorinus' progress through the baptismal waters since the crucial step of humble submission to Christ and the ecclesiastical community has been made.

This overall image of Victorinus' Christian initiation and Augustine's possible remembrance of it as he prepared for his baptism in 387 encourages a reconsideration of Augustine's evidenced humility in the time around his conversion and baptism. The most conspicuous example of humility during the Milan period is the manner in which

professus erat. quanto minus ergo uereri debuit mansuetum gregem tuum pronuntians uerbum tuum, qui non uerebatur in uerbis suis turbas insanorum? O'Donnell, v. 1. 90; CCL 27. 116.

⁹⁹ *itaque ubi ascendi ut redderet, omnes sibimet inuicem, quisque ut eum nouerat, instrepuerunt nomen eius strepitu gratulationis (quis autem ibi non eum nouerat?) et sonuit presso sonitu per ora cunctorum conlaetantium, 'Victorinus, Victorinus'. cito sonuerunt exultatione, quia uidebant eum, et cito siluerunt intentione, ut audirent eum. pronuntiauit ille fidem ueracem praeclara fiducia, et uolebant eum omnes rapere intro in cor suum. et rapiebant amando et gaudendo: hae rapientium manus erant.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 90; CCL 27. 116.

¹⁰⁰ comprising well behaved people, however, who 'murmured' quietly and spoke 'delightedly' in contrast to the 'frenzied pagans' Victorinus had addressed previously.

¹⁰¹ a voice earlier described as 'terrifying' in its power (*conf.* 8.2.3; *ore terrifico*).

Augustine went about leaving his secular profession once converted, specifically, how he delayed his resignation as professor of rhetoric at Milan on account of his wanting to avoid the attention more decisive action would have brought. Of this delay he wrote,

I made a decision 'in your sight' (Ps. 18.15) not to break off teaching with an abrupt renunciation, but quietly to retire from my post as a salesman of words in the markets of rhetoric. ... Fortunately there were only a few days left before the Vintage Vacation. I decided to put up with them so that I could resign with due formality. Redeemed by you, I was not now going to return to putting my skills up for sale. Our plan was formed with your knowledge but was not publicly known, except to our intimate circle. It was agreed among us that it was not to be published generally (*conf.* 9.2.2).¹⁰²

He continued to explain his decision in the next paragraph:

The examples given by your servants whom you had transformed from black to shining white and from death to life,¹⁰³ crowded in upon my thoughts. They burnt away and destroyed my heavy sluggishness, preventing me from being dragged down to low things. ... However, because of your name which you have sanctified throughout the earth (Ezek. 36.23), my vow and profession would no doubt have some to approve it. So it would have seemed like ostentation if, rather than waiting for the imminent vacation period, I were prematurely to resign from a public position which had a high profile before everyone. The consequence would be that everyone would turn their scrutiny on what I had done in deliberately anticipating the coming day of the vacation, and there would be much gossip that I was ambitious to appear important. What gain was it for me that people should be thinking and disputing about my state of mind and that a decision which was good to me should be evil spoken of?¹⁰⁴

It is easy for a modern to be skeptical when reading such a passage, treating it as simple false pride. Augustine certainly labors the point, but there is something of more significance here. He himself says that some other Christians might have thought it sin to remain in his important post once he determined to begin in God's service.¹⁰⁵ His answer to such a charge again links humility and baptism. He said, 'I would not contest that. But, most merciful God, did you not grant pardon and remission for this

¹⁰² *Et placuit mihi in conspectu tuo non tumultuose abripere sed leniter subtrahere ministerium linguae meae nundinis loquacitatis, ... et opportune iam paucissimi dies supererant ad uindemiales ferias, et statui tolerare illos, ut sollemniter abscederem et redemptus a te iam non redirem uenalis. consilium ergo nostrum erat coram te, coram hominibus autem nisi nostris non erat. et conuenerat inter nos ne passim cuiquam effunderetur.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 103; CCL 27. 133-134.

¹⁰³ which would include the *exempla* of book eight: the courtiers of Trier, Antony, and Victorinus; see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 78.

¹⁰⁴ *et exempla seruorum tuorum, quos de nigris lucidos et de mortuis uiuos feceras, congesta in sinum cogitationis nostrae urebant et absumeabant grauem torporem, ... uerum tamen quia propter nomen tuum, quod sanctificasti per terras, etiam laudatores utique haberet uotum et propositum nostrum, iactantiae simile uidebatur non opperiri tam proximum feriarum tempus, sed de publica professione atque ante oculos omnium sita ante discedere, ut conuersa in factum meum ora cunctorum, intuentium quam uicinum uindemialium diem praeuenire uoluerim, multa dicerent, quod quasi appetissem magnus uideri. et quo mihi erat istuc, ut putaretur et disputaretur de animo meo et blasphemaretur bonum nostrum?* O'Donnell, v. 1. 104; CCL 27. 134.

¹⁰⁵ *conf.* 9.2.4. This statement is apologetic in tone and very much from the perspective of 397. Still, it is possible that Augustine might have been content even in 387 to suffer ill thoughts as part of the humility associated with Christian initiation.

fault together with my other horrendous and mortal sins, in the holy water of baptism?'¹⁰⁶

O'Donnell, commenting on the delayed resignation '*de publica professione*' (*conf.* 9.2.3), states:

Augustine does not emulate Victorinus' boldness, for though he takes baptism publicly, here is a notable failure of resemblance between the two conversion stories (*cf.* 8.2.5 '*illum autem maluisse salutem suam in conspectu sanctae multitudinis profiteri*'): Victorinus did not shun the gaze of the crowd, but Augustine wanted to avoid publicity'.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Augustine undoubtedly did not follow the 'Victorinus model' in full, but this was not for lack of determination. Instead, it seems to be because Augustine had learned the lesson of the model. In the *Confessions*, Victorinus' 'coming into the church' is public from his decision to its fulfillment; there is still a vestige of pride and position. Augustine wanted to avoid that vestige.¹⁰⁸ He would have seen the easy opportunity of drawing attention to himself like Victorinus, indeed it would have been his instinct. Yet, he resisted because the rejection of his pride, specifically his rhetoric and *ambitio saeculi*, was as central to his baptism as his rejection of concupiscence in favor of continence had been in his recorded conversion.¹⁰⁹ The *Confessions* notes that Victorinus was given the option of a private baptism, but this was refused.¹¹⁰ Public baptism was mandatory to both Victorinus (at least in the *Confessions*) and Augustine, at least partially because a necessary part of the humiliation of ecclesial initiation was being identified with the Christian '*rudes*'/'*animales*'¹¹¹ – who simply believed the authority of the church, not aspiring to understand it spiritually. For these less intellectual neophytes, the time of catechesis around baptism provided almost all of the spiritual 'thought' or information about Christian truth they could grasp or would need.¹¹² Augustine, however, seems to have grasped the necessity of real humility and

¹⁰⁶ ... *at ego non contendo. sed tu, domine misericordissime, nonne et hoc peccatum cum ceteris horrendis et funereis in aqua sancta ignouisti et remisisti mihi?* O'Donnell, v. 1. 104; CCL 27. 135.

¹⁰⁷ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 78.

¹⁰⁸ certainly any candidate who opted for public baptism made public profession. The public aspect of Christian confession itself was probably viewed by Augustine (and maybe Simplicianus) as an important, even necessary, part of the process of submission to God in his church. The point here is that even public Christian confession held the danger of 'holy pride'. Augustine might well have recognized this danger (maybe even from his recollection of Victorinus) and wished to avoid it.

¹⁰⁹ *cf. conf.* 8.11.25-8.12.29. J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 70 *cf.* 104) is quite right to point out that the delay between Augustine's conversion and baptism, and esp. the retreat to Cassiciacum, may have served the purpose of a trial period 'to test resolve and as a way to avoid whatever temptations court and urban life had to offer', i.e. *contra* pride and lustful desire.

¹¹⁰ *conf.* 8.2.5; *cf.* J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 21, on this option.

¹¹¹ *cf. Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-1.1.2, where they are also more subtly referred to as the 'little ones' of the church. See also R.J. Teske, 'Spirituals and Spiritual Interpretation in Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 15 (1984), 66f.

¹¹² for common people at the time, it was not expected that they evaluate before taking the rites but that they simply obey by taking them. This was not necessarily the case for educated persons and those of higher class (nor their desire, see J.J. O'Donnell's comment on Augustine's *cat. rud.* in

submission to the church more deeply than his earlier countryman. It is also probable that Augustine wanted to remain, like Victorinus, part of the laity,¹¹³ not wanting public Christian obligation or responsibility. It is difficult to disentangle this desire entirely from Augustine's conception of humility, as will be seen in following chapters.

Nevertheless, the *Confessions* account clearly suggests that humility was central to Augustine's entrance into the Christian communion. The Victorinus 'story' is an expression of the fact that in Simplicianus' eyes conversion was not complete until baptism with its public profession and that he did think it necessary to be officially linked to the Catholic church. Augustine doubtless picked up on this, even if for him, like Victorinus, this baptismal 'link' was more a significant and necessary rite of personal passage and public profession of affiliation than a commitment to corporate involvement.¹¹⁴

EVIDENCE ABOUT THE CHURCH AT MILAN

The first direct mention of the church by Augustine in any of his writings comes either in *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*¹¹⁵ (*ecclesiae catholicae, mor. ecc.* 10.16) or *The Greatness of the Soul* (*matrem ecclesiam, quant.* 33.76).¹¹⁶ *On the Morals* was not begun, however, until late 387 or early 388.¹¹⁷ *The Greatness of the Soul* was written in 388 also at Rome. It is difficult to tell exactly when these specific sections would have been written relative to each other.¹¹⁸ Regardless of the exact date, in either 387 or 388 at Rome, Augustine's writings first mention the 'church'. This raises

Confessions v. 3 (1992), 104). Such distinction was not, however, seen as degrading by most church leaders or their 'flocks' (cf. Augustine's shift away from his more arrogant view of the 'little ones' in the church – evidenced e.g. in ch. 6 of *mus.*, c. 390 – will be discussed below in ch. 5).

¹¹³ see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 15-16, on whether *conf.* 8.2.5 necessarily implies that Victorinus remained among the laity.

¹¹⁴ *conf.* 8.5.10; on the 'imitation of Victorinus', cf. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 31. Under his discussion of 'ad imitandum' O'Donnell states that 'Courcelle, *Les Confessions*–66 n. 1, takes this to mean only that Augustine was inclined to follow Victorinus in becoming a formal member of the Catholic church. This requires a distinction between the decision for continence and the decision for baptism that Augustine does not himself make'. Though not defending Courcelle, it may be that the previous discussion offers some such 'distinctions'.

¹¹⁵ hereafter referred to as *On the Morals*.

¹¹⁶ CSEL 90. 19 and CSEL 89. 224 respectively; cf. also *quant.* 34.77, *ecclesia catholica* (CSEL 89. 225), and *quant.* 34.78, *ecclesia* (CSEL 89. 228). See also Appendix B, Table 8 and p. 289-291. For discussion of these earliest references see ch. 3.

¹¹⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 70; O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 433; CSEL 90 Praefatio, VII: 'Libros quos hic denuo ad fidem codicum recensitos edimus, Augustinus anno 387 Romae scripsit neophyta, primam uidelicet fidei apologiam anno insequenti, ut uidetur, publici iuris factam in Africa' (citing *mor. ecc.* 1.1; *mor. Man.* 2.26; and *retr.* 1.7.1).

¹¹⁸ see ch. 3, p. 69-72, for further discussion and a chronological Table dealing with the issues surrounding *quant.* and esp. *mor. ecc.* J.K. Coyle's very significant suggestions in *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 66-76, on the 'internal' chronology of *mor. ecc.* are addressed there and in Appendix A, p. 271-277.

the question of the importance of the period at Milan, before and after baptism, for Augustine's ecclesial development. On the one hand, the church is not referred to in his writings from Milan; but on the other hand, discussion of the church appears very soon after his departure from the imperial city. Since the period at Milan contains the probable source(s) of Augustine's new ecclesial attention, the evidence about the church there and Augustine's experience in it must be examined.

As indicated above, a first order appeal to the available evidence yields no certain conclusions about Augustine's view of the church. The only undoubtedly extant work produced entirely at Milan (actually a collection of notes and not a proper work, as Augustine indicated in his *Review*, 1.6), *On the Immortality of the Soul*, makes little mention of explicitly Christian things. God (*deus*) is referred to as the only thing greater than the soul:¹¹⁹ the 'highest good' (*imm. an.* 24); and the 'highest beauty' (*imm. an.* 25).¹²⁰ The work displays Augustine's continued use of the philosophical framework of neo-Platonism to reason out¹²¹ the truth grasped on the basis of the authority of Christ which he had accepted on faith.¹²² However, as previously mentioned, this is not the only textual evidence from the period. Augustine also began works on the liberal arts.¹²³ Of these, the only work to have come down indisputably and complete is *On Music*.¹²⁴ It is also possible that at least sections of *On Dialectic* and *On Grammar* have survived.¹²⁵ However, neither of these two make reference to the church, or religious experience or rites, directly. Nevertheless, the kind of activity which these writings on philosophy and the liberal disciplines reflect at Milan can be reconstructed profitably. One particularly good example of this reconstruction is

¹¹⁹ *imm. an.* 13.22.

¹²⁰ *summo bono.* CSEL 89. 126; and *summa pulchritudine.* CSEL 89. 127. See *mor. ecc.* 24.44 for an example of how these ideas of God were integrated into a more Christian understanding and presentation.

¹²¹ 'as much as it is permitted to man' (*quant.* 15.25: *quantum homini talia uestigare permissum est.* CSEL 89. 162).

¹²² continuations from Cassiciacum are also clearly seen after the Milan period in Augustine's ideal of striving after God in love as the way to reach happiness (*mor. ecc.* 11.18-12.21) and in his use of the various levels of the ascent of the soul in *quant.* 33.70-76. Any conclusions drawn from *imm. an.*, such as that it reveals an individual uninterested in Christianity or completely preoccupied with non-religious philosophy would be highly speculative in light of the cursory nature of the work, esp. since its 'companion volumes' – *sol.* and *quant.* – present a much broader picture of Augustine's thought and interests in the periods immediately before and after his baptism. In *quant.*, his philosophical speculation (esp. concerning the soul) continued; but its religious digressions and Christian elements generally possessed a new clarity.

¹²³ H.-I. Marrou (*Saint Augustin et le fin de la culture antique* (1938), 214 (cf. 211-219f.) has shown how this program was part of a long tradition: 'L'idée que les arts libéraux constituent, au moins théoriquement, la préparation normale et nécessaire à la philosophie est précisément une de ces idées courantes qui faisaient partie de la [koïne] hellénistique'.

¹²⁴ this treatise was worked on and completed primarily in Africa c. 390, making it of interest as a means of gauging changes in Augustine's interests and thought over his pre-ordination period. Evidence from it (esp. the later books) will be addressed in ch. 4 and 5.

¹²⁵ see n. 34 and 35.

Harrison's admirably concise treatment of how in Augustine's early writings 'The ascent of the soul or reason' is 'one which proceeds through the disciplines of the liberal arts':

from the reasonable pleasure and delight of the senses, to the communication and expression of its meaning between men in *grammar*, to the teaching and learning of this meaning by the discipline of *dialectics*, to the persuading and convincing of its truth in *rhetoric*, to the use of *number* which looks beyond the transient rhythmic sounds of the rhetor or poet to what they eternally signify, and finally, to *geometry* which looks beyond the beauties of the earth and heavens, to the rational unity of design and number by which they are governed. Thus, if a man rightly uses the 'shadows and vestiges' of reason in sensible reality, does not take them for reason itself, and does not become ensnared by their misleading, false images, but looks to their unity, in analysing and synthesizing them, then, Augustine writes, 'without being rash, he can search after things divine – not merely as truths to be believed, but also as matters to be contemplated, understood and retained'.¹²⁶

Unfortunately, the sections of these works on the 'disciplines' which can be attributed to Milan do not add directly to the discussion regarding the church or the 'baptismal' events of Augustine's second stay there. At the very least, they illustrate the fundamental continuity in Augustine's many interests and activities from Cassiciacum regardless of other things experienced in 387 at Milan.

The continuation of neo-Platonic categories in the Milan writings is obvious and to be expected in light of the formula described by Coyle as 'Neoplatonism in the service of the Faith'¹²⁷ which was established at Cassiciacum. Since Augustine must surely have renewed contact with the 'Milan circle' of Christian neo-Platonists, *e.g.* with Simplicianus, possibly Theodorus,¹²⁸ and the people they represent if the 'circle' was at all cohesive, it is also not surprising that the neo-Platonic influence and activity persisted. Augustine's own clique of the Cassiciacum group¹²⁹ and other friends such as Verecundus, Nebridius, and Evodius¹³⁰ would have created another parameter for his interaction and stimulation.¹³¹ Typical of this neo-Platonic vein is Augustine's

¹²⁶ C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 26, in a discussion of *De ordine*.

¹²⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 70 and 135-143.

¹²⁸ despite his claims for interaction with Augustine during his first stay at Milan, P. Courcelle's section, 'Mallius Theodorus, maître d'Augustin' (in *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 153-156) gives no indication about this later period. See J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 419-420, for general information and references regarding Theodorus.

¹²⁹ *cf. conf.* 9.2.2, *nostrum consilium*; for participants *cf.* ch. 1, p. 8; see also n. 10 above.

¹³⁰ all three of whom shared most of Augustine's interests and concerns during this time; see *conf.* 9.3.5-9.3.6; 8.6.13 and 9.3.6-9.4.7; and 9.8.17 respectively.

¹³¹ they were all probably among those described in the *retr.* 1.6 as interested in the liberal disciplines. For example, we know that Nebridius and Evodius were attracted to questions of philosophy from the epistolary evidence between Augustine and Nebridius (*i.e. ep.* 3-14 (3-4 and possibly 13 are from Cassiciacum; see Appendix A, p. 269-270 n. 6-8); *cf. conf.* 9.4.7) and from Evodius' role in *quant.* Alypius had to be persuaded at Cassiciacum to include the name of Christ in the works written there so taken was he with the new philosophy (apparently subsuming Christianity under it): '[Alypius was] at first scornfully critical of inserting Christ's name in my books. He wanted them to smell of the "cedars" of the schools ... rather than of the healthgiving herbs of the church which are a remedy against serpents' (*conf.* 9.4.7: *Alypius, fratrem cordis mei, subegeris*

statement that, 'The higher powers, therefore, transmit their form, received from the highest beauty, to those lower in the natural order' (*imm. an.* 16.25).¹³² Despite the lack of information about the church or religious events in Milan in the direct textual evidence, an understanding of Augustine's experience can be pieced together from what is known about the process of baptismal preparation he would have undergone, his activities during the Lenten period, and from his later works.¹³³ The first two of these sources of evidence will continue to be examined in this chapter, and the following chapter will explore some of the indications of influence from Milan which emerge in the writings on the way back to Thagaste. In the end, it will be found that Augustine's second stay in Milan – in the presence of Monnica, Adeodatus, and Alypius, and other Christians,¹³⁴ in attendance at the church,¹³⁵ finishing his catechetical instruction, and in undergoing baptism (these latter two with the particular involvement of Ambrose) – had a considerable influence on his proto-ecclesiology.¹³⁶

CATECHETICAL AND BAPTISMAL INSTRUCTION

Augustine told of his intention towards baptism in book nine of the *Confessions* (9.6.14), 'When the time came for me to give in my name for baptism, we left the country and returned to Milan'.¹³⁷ He gave virtually no details, however, *about* his baptism in the *Confessions*. In fact, O'Donnell has noted that in his entire corpus Augustine never discussed the 'cult act' of baptism.¹³⁸ This does not, however, change the fact that

nomini unigeniti tui, domini et saluatoris nostris Iesu Christi, quod primo dedignabatur inseri litteris nostris. magis enim eas uolebat redolere gymnasiorum cedros, ... quam salubres herbas ecclesiasticas aduersas serpentibus. O'Donnell, v. 1. 106; CCL 27. 137).

¹³² *Tradunt ergo speciem a summa pulchritudine acceptam potentiora infirmioribus naturali ordine.* CSEL 89. 127; cf. *Enneads* 42.1.47-50; and G. Watson, *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1990), 212-213, for commentary and references for this section. It is also cited by J.J. O'Donnell (v. 2 (1992), 247) in commentary on *conf.* 4.13.20 to show that Augustine's view was that 'Only when the creature achieves its own measure of beauty is it possible to see God' (cf. *ord.* 2.19.51); he also notes that this is 'a text so Platonic (or Porphyrian) that some think it little more than notes on Augustine's reading'.

¹³³ relevant information from later works will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Scarcely a year after leaving Milan, there are extant works, beginning when Augustine was in Rome. These works suggest that the events at Milan did exert considerable influence on Augustine's view of the church and his personal Christian activities.

¹³⁴ esp. those neo-Platonist and philosophical and 'liberally' sensitive ones he had gotten to know like Simplicianus

¹³⁵ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14; 9.8.17.

¹³⁶ i.e. the melange in his mind (in 387 and early 388) of many of the ideas and elements which would come together in his earliest identifiable ecclesiastical synthesis. No complete or coherent ecclesiology was yet apparent.

¹³⁷ *Inde ubi tempus aduenit quo me nomen dare oporteret, relicto rure Mediolanum remeauimus.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 108; CCL 27. 140.

¹³⁸ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxix.

The central decision [Augustine] makes in the period narrated in the *Confessions* is, not to believe the doctrines of the Catholic Christians (that is important, but preliminary), but to present himself for cult initiation—and the threshold there is a matter not of doctrine but of morals. ... His decision to seek that initiation, taken provisionally in August 386, and carried out on the night of 24-5 April 387, was the centrepiece of his conversion.¹³⁹

O'Donnell elaborates on this: 'The provisional nature of that decision [to seek cult initiation in 386] perhaps needs emphasis. Not until April 387 did Augustine make the commitment to the Christian cult that he would regard as irrevocable'.¹⁴⁰ In these helpful comments against the possible modern tendency to 'downplay cult initiation for Augustine',¹⁴¹ it is observed that

Few modern scholars ... hold a view of the importance and efficacy of cult acts that even remotely approaches the visceral reverence for cult that all late antique men and women felt. We like to believe that there were serene and cultless philosophers in that age, not exactly anticlerical but certainly not superstitiously devoted to ritual and ceremony. Whether there were such people is perhaps irrelevant to the immediate case of Augustine, for it is clear that he did not believe such people existed.¹⁴²

Such points emphasizing the ritual and ceremonial, or 'cultic', nature of late antique sensibilities are valid. Yet, in Augustine's understanding of the religious life and true 'philosophy', religion, and thus cult, does not need to be tied to institutional ritual or ceremony. The pursuit of God and the soul was a (indeed *the*) spiritual pursuit for Augustine – it was 'religious'. O'Donnell himself notes that for Augustine confession, as an 'act of "making the truth"', was itself an important part of his religion, somewhere between doctrinal disputation and cult act—perhaps even forming a link between the two'.¹⁴³ This 'link' in the *Confessions* may have its origin as far back as Augustine's experience as a neophyte, where his first 'confession' as a Christian combined public action and public humility before God in order to establish his personal 'relationship' to

¹³⁹ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii. It is interesting to note the centrality of '*et baptizati sumus*' in book nine. The book is arranged symmetrically in two halves around these words (even structurally the reference to baptism lies very near to the mid-point of the *Confessions* text), cf. J.J. O'Donnell, v. 3 (1992), 72 (see also 106-108). O'Donnell (p. 106) goes so far as to drastically change the punctuation around them (which he notes has traditionally 'buried' them 'mid-paragraph preceded not by a period but by a colon, semicolon, comma', etc.) by introducing a new paragraph, with the justification that anything else 'is to subordinate what was for Augustine the bishop the most important single event reported in the whole text' (he also gives linguistic rationale). This probable 'centrality' is all the more interesting/striking in comparison with the more doubtful garden conversion recorded in bk. 8. There the surrounding literary flourish is unmistakable, but did these events really happen? (certainly Augustine was 'converted' in 386, but in this way?). Here, we know that the event of baptism happened and that it was significant but there are certainly no literary 'fireworks'.

¹⁴⁰ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii. He continues, 'The Cassiciacum dialogues come during a frustrating interim, and much of the peculiar character of those works can be traced to that neither-fish-nor-fowl state of Augustine's mind and commitment at the time'.

¹⁴¹ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii.

¹⁴² J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii-xxix (giving *ciu.* 8.12 (cf. Porphyry's *uita Plotini* 2) as evidence).

¹⁴³ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxix.

God. Broadly, Augustine's personal pursuit of true philosophy incorporated a religious life focused on a spiritual relationship with God that was facilitated both by the general Catholic cult acts and by personal religious and spiritual practice/devotion.

Therefore, the question arises as to the nature of the cult rites to which Augustine was submitting himself. Fortunately, baptism during Augustine's day, which generally took place at Easter,¹⁴⁴ has received considerable scholarly attention.¹⁴⁵ Information exists about the type of catechetical instruction to which Augustine would have been exposed¹⁴⁶ as well as about the events that surrounded baptismal preparation.¹⁴⁷ Jungmann notes that 'the later period of the catechumenate (fourth-fifth centuries) was characterized by the conditions resulting from mass-conversions. Many contented themselves with entering the catechumenate only ... delay[ing] Baptism'.¹⁴⁸ By applying for baptism, Augustine was going beyond any fashionable association with the church and specifically entering the Catholic communion of believers. The later fourth century was a period in which the catechetical focus of the Easter season was reaching new heights in the church. The six weeks prior to Easter involved, in the West, a preparatory fast¹⁴⁹ and was also a time for increased focus on religious 'exercise'.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the general atmosphere of religious concentration and fasting, a certain pattern of preparation and instruction would have been followed by the candidates. Augustine would have originally received an introductory catechesis 'designed to give a survey of the content of the Christian doctrine of salvation'.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 2. Baptism was not, however, exclusively at Easter; see F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 336, n. 8.

¹⁴⁵ for the discussion that follows, see J.A. Jungmann *passim*, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 1-11; H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation, Studies in Christian Antiquity* v. 17 (1974); and also J.Y. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Modern Europe* (1986), 96-104. For earlier background material, see R.P.C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (1962), *passim* (but esp. 52-68 and 130-176). Riley's discussion receives considerable attention in ch. 3, p. 87f.

¹⁴⁶ he probably referred to this teaching in *quant.* 34.77.

¹⁴⁷ almost none of the evidence which follows comes from Augustine. Moreover, very few of the processes described were discussed by him. Even taking into account the *disciplina arcani* (cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 106-108), the question of why so little of this information is present in Augustine's writings remains – esp. if his initiatory experience was as significant as is claimed here. These problems, with the evidential limitations, are unavoidable. The justification of the discussion of possible elements of ecclesial significance discussed here will emerge from the re-examination of Milan in ch. 3 based on this framework of events.

¹⁴⁸ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 3.

¹⁴⁹ from which 'Lent' comes (linguistically deriving from the Anglo-Saxon *lencten*, meaning 'spring'). This fast (which took place over a seven week period in the East), came to last for six weeks in the West, and meant refraining from flesh, fish, eggs and dairy products. *Encyclopedia*, Ferguson (1990), 533.

¹⁵⁰ for support, with reference to Ambrose, see F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 336-337.

¹⁵¹ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 4; probably this was received after return from Cassiciacum, though possibly before.

Catechumens were then urged to indicate their application for baptism at the beginning of the Easter season.¹⁵² During this season as a *competens*, which he had become by asking for baptism, Augustine 'would have received solemn instruction from Ambrose himself'.¹⁵³ From Ambrose's time onward, candidates read parts of scripture during their preparations for the Pascha.¹⁵⁴ Warnings against such things as idolatry and pagan religion, and explanations of such things as the mode of the incarnation and the doctrine of hell, would have been heard.¹⁵⁵ Before baptism, the 'handing-over of the creed' as well as the Lord's prayer¹⁵⁶ usually took place in the *traditio symboli*, a special ceremony especially common in the West. Both of these communicated elements were meant to be held secret and had to be learned and memorized orally.¹⁵⁷ Clerical reading of special passages of scripture, such as the Gospels, also often accompanied such ceremonies. All of these elements would have occurred in a solemn ritualistic format culminating in baptism itself on the vigil of Easter.¹⁵⁸ The ceremony, with the candidates in white baptismal robes, included: a renunciation of Satan, confession of faith, confirmation, immersion, the liturgical celebration, and, marking their new status, participation by the initiates in 'holy communion'.¹⁵⁹

As the most obvious presentation of the 'mysteries' of the church that were being received in this whole operation, the creed would have been a natural focus for Augustine's attention. Indeed, if the emphasis on public humility in confession and submission – in both cases of fact to the creed – was as significant for Augustine as has been argued, it is possible that the symbol would have been even more focal to him.¹⁶⁰ The following texts provide the two versions of the Milanese creed put forward by A.

¹⁵² cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 104; cf. *conf.* 9.5.13.

¹⁵³ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124; where he goes on to note that 'Ambrose never spared himself in directing this momentous initiation'.

¹⁵⁴ indeed, Jungmann (*Handing on the Faith* (1959), 5 esp. n. 7) believes that, 'In the course of these readings *Genesis*, *Proverbs* and the [italics sic] *Sermon on the Mount* were read through in their entirety'.

¹⁵⁵ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124.

¹⁵⁶ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 105, where he also notes that some of Augustine's own sermons 'one the creed, ss. 212-15; on the Lord's prayer, ss. 56-9' survive.

¹⁵⁷ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 5; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124; J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 24. In turn, as was noted in connection with Victorinus' initiation, the candidates affirmed the creed in the *redditio symboli*. On the *disciplina arcani*, see *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1992, English ed.), 98; and F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 453 n. 5. If Augustine had heard about these events before, the influence had been intellectual and informational not of religious impact. Now, in the ritual context, the new ecclesiological and sacramental dimension would have been unmistakable.

¹⁵⁸ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 6. This rite 'itself emphasized the momentous nature of the transformation Augustine was undergoing'; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124.

¹⁵⁹ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 6; see also Brown's vivid description of the scene in Milan (*Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124) and the detailed outline of the program of the office in F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 338-340.

¹⁶⁰ probable influential aspects of the creed are identified in ch. 3, p. 87-93.

Hahn¹⁶¹ and are probably very close to the one which Augustine heard and assented to during his catechesis.¹⁶² Hahn gives the first, based on Augustine, as follows:

I believe in God the Father almighty. And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord. Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified and buried, on the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, [and] he sits at the right (hand) of the Father. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the remission of sins, [and] the resurrection of the flesh.¹⁶³

The second reconstruction, based on Ambrose, reads:

I believe [in God the Father almighty. And in Christ Jesus his only Son, our Lord, who was born from the Holy Spirit and] the virgin [Mary], (who) died and was buried under Pontius Pilate, [rose] on the third day from the dead, ascended [into the heavens], (and who) sits at the right (hand) of the Father, [whence he will come to judge the living] and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the remission of sins, (and) the resurrection [of the flesh].¹⁶⁴

During the week following the baptism, the neophytes received one final catechism on the sacraments and attended a number of special services (with sermons, explaining the

¹⁶¹ A. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der Alten Kirche* (1897), 36-40.

¹⁶² note for comparison the following reconstruction of the ancient Roman creed as given in J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (31972), 102:

Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem, et in Christum Iesum, filium eius unicum, dominum nostrum, qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria uirgine, qui [...] sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit in caelos, sedet ad dexteram patris unde uenturus est iudicare uiuos et mortuos; et in spiritum sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam [catholicam], remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem.

The brackets here are mine and indicate differences from the Milanese creed; note esp. '*ecclesiam sanctam*' at Milan, with no mention of 'Catholic'; we can also note the absence in all of these 'editions' of the 'descent into hell' and the 'communion of the saints' clauses (dropped in Kelly's last edition).

¹⁶³ A. Hahn, *Symbole und Glaubensregeln* (1897), 38-40, 'Nach Augustinus:

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Et in Iesum Christum Filium ejus unicum, Dominum nostrum. Qui natus [or possibly 'conceptus'] est de Spiritu sancto et uirgine Maria, passus est sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus et sepultus, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, adscendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Inde venturus est iudicare uiuos et mortuos. Et in Spiritum sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem'.

This reconstruction is based on Augustine's s. 212; 213; and 214 in the *Sermones in traditioni Symboli* (see Hahn, p. 38 n. 41 for references; with particular comment on s. 213). There is no substantive difference between the two versions, but of the two I prefer this one because of the number of lacunae in the Ambrosian sources.

¹⁶⁴ A. Hahn, *Symbole und Glaubensregeln* (1897), 36-37, 'Das muthmassliche Symbol des Ambrosius:

Credo [in Deum Patrem omnipotentem. Et in Christum Iesum filium ejus unicum, dominum nostrum, qui natus est de Spiritu sancto et Maria] uirgine, sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus, tertia die [resurrexit] a mortuis, ascendit [in coelos], sedet ad dexteram Patris, [unde uenturus est iudicare uiuos] et mortuos. Et in Spiritum sanctum, ecclesiam sanctam, remissionem peccatorum, [carnis] resurrectionem' (brackets are from Hahn denoting lacunae in the manuscripts. My own brackets in the text have been changed to parentheses in this case).

This reconstruction is based on what appears to be the oldest manuscript, found in a Vatican codex, titled *Beati Ambrosii, episcopi Mediolanensis explanatio Symboli ad initiandos*, whose considerable lacunae are 'patched' using two later manuscripts, one of which has connections to Maximus of Turin (see Hahn, p. 36 n. 39). For Ambrose's *expl. sym.* in recent edition, see the text in *Sources Chrétiennes* 25 (1961), 60f.



creed, for example) in which they occupied special positions.¹⁶⁵

Undoubtedly, the pervading themes and direction of the entire baptismal process were highly ecclesiological; and therefore, it seems unlikely that Augustine's appreciation of the church would have been unaffected by them.¹⁶⁶ Brown's observation on the scene reinforces this:

Augustine was, plainly, deeply affected by what he heard when, after the main celebration of the Liturgy, the *competentes* assembled in the baptistery adjoining the main basilica to hear their bishop: 'Are we so out of touch with our feelings as not to remember how conscientiously and with what anxiety we heard those who taught us, the catechism laid down for us, when we begged the sacraments of that font of life?' (*de fide et oper.* 6.9).¹⁶⁷

At least, the implication from Augustine's *On Faith and the Creed* is that his experience as a *competens* at Milan was memorable and stirring. Aside from all the imagery and symbolism, it could be speculated that the welcome into the communion of the faithful in the rite of the Eucharist would have been particularly poignant to Augustine. One final significant congregational element in the catechetical environment which Augustine encountered and which comes from Ambrose was the bishop's hymns. Augustine's mention of them¹⁶⁸ and use of them is notable.¹⁶⁹ His comments in the *Confessions* on this element of his ecclesiastical exposure provide an apt ending to this discussion of the ecclesial context.

How I wept during your hymns and songs! I was deeply moved by the music of the sweet chants of your church. The sounds flowed into my ears and the truth was distilled into my heart. This

¹⁶⁵ J.A. Jungmann, *Handing on the Faith* (1959), 7; and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 108-109.

¹⁶⁶ *cf. conf.* 9.6.14 *ad fin.*; it is interesting to think of Augustine as a receptacle of stimuli during this period. Certainly, he was neither able nor interested to concentrate on everything he encountered that had to do with the church. Moreover, not all the stimuli he encountered was ecclesial (*e.g.* his understanding of the soul received new impetus and attention during the period at Milan and Rome; *cf. imm. an. and quant.*). After, and probably at Milan, the church became an object of consideration; but it was one object among a number of others. The line of central interest in 'true philosophy' continued. Chapter three will show how Augustine's works from 387-388 acknowledge even certain ecclesial aspects which were later rejected or ignored.

¹⁶⁷ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 124; note also F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 336-342.

¹⁶⁸ *e.g. conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15; all the more surprising considering the lacunae of other information.

¹⁶⁹ *cf. e.g.* 'Creator Deus Omnium' in *mus. passim*. See J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986, English ed.), 177-179, for references to Ambrose's hymnody; see also J. Fontaine, ed., *Ambroise de Milan. Hymnes* (1992). Another possibly significant lacuna in our resources is Ambrose's non-extant *de sacramento siue de philosophia* (paraphrased by O'Donnell (xxxviii) as 'On Baptism, or Concerning Philosophy'). See G. Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie* (1974), 247-337, for dating. He considers it to have been written by 387 and probably in 384-386. O'Donnell gives a summary reconstruction (with references) of the work (*Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxxviii n. 58): Ambrose's book, he says, 'attacked those who claimed that Christ had learned from Plato ... and it spoke strongly in favour of the redeeming power of the sacrament of baptism, linking to baptism a moral reformation in matters of the flesh and praising continence ... the work strongly implies something approaching a doctrine of original sin, ... and attacked Platonic reincarnation teachings'. For more detailed discussion, see Madec, 248-268.

caused the feelings of devotion to overflow. Tears ran, and it was good for me to have that experience (*conf.* 9.6.14).¹⁷⁰

In summary, it is clear that Augustine felt the need to be received into the church (officially) as a necessary condition for receiving the cleansing of the authority of Christ.¹⁷¹ It is also the case that he was involved in a process (of salvation) which was charged with ecclesiological significance. Ambrose's central role in the events of the initiation process has been mentioned and his position as one of Augustine's few early concrete links to the church has been reaffirmed from chapter one. The implication is that both the rites of the church and Ambrose's input sparked and shaped Augustine's ecclesiology. Having considered the ecclesiastical elements of Augustine's experience of initiation, it remains to draw out the Ambrosian stamp of the events at Milan. Other of Augustine's early texts (and some of Ambrose's) will be examined in the following chapter for they still have much to say at a secondary level about the events at Milan, but Ambrose's possible contribution must first be outlined.

AMBROSE'S INFLUENCE ON AUGUSTINE'S NASCENT ECCLESIOLOGY, PART ONE

Considerable discussion regarding the influence of Ambrose on Augustine in Milan has taken place since Courcelle's *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* was first published in 1950. The *Confessions* itself highlights Ambrose in a special way among those involved in Augustine's spiritual progress.¹⁷² His early influence must be acknowledged in helping Augustine overcome the three great problems which he brought to Milan: the source of evil; the nature of spirit (or the mode of God's existence); and the defensibility of the Old Testament.¹⁷³ Moreover, he provided Augustine with the stimulus to enter and stay in the ecclesiastical environment. For example, he exemplified that there were thoughtful and spiritually minded Catholics¹⁷⁴ and provided impetus for attending sermons¹⁷⁵ and possibly for engagement in the

¹⁷⁰ *quantum fleui in hymnis et canticis tuis, suaue sonantis ecclesiae tuae uocibus commotus acriter! uoces illae influebant auribus meis, et eliquabatur ueritas in cor meum, et exaestuabat inde affectus pietatis, et currebant lacrimae, et bene mihi erat cum eis.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 109; CCL 27. 141.

¹⁷¹ by public confession of dependence on Christ and submission to the church (as well as the humility and identification with the mass of the unlearned and 'unspiritual' believers).

¹⁷² from the highlighted 'preacher' of *conf.* 1.1.1 (in all probability Ambrose, see H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 3, n. 2) through *conf.* 5.13.23-5.14.25; 6.2.2-6.5.7; 6.11.18; 9.5.13-9.8.17; 9.12.32; to 11.27.35; cf. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 85-86 (esp. n. 2), for Augustine's enduring view of Ambrose as a sort of 'spiritual father'.

¹⁷³ cf. *conf.* 3.7.12; 5.14.24-5.14.25; 6.4.5-6.4.6; see also G. Watson, *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1990), 2 and 16-17.

¹⁷⁴ *conf.* 6.4.5-6

¹⁷⁵ *conf.* 5.13.23-5.14.24.

worship of the church.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, until the period in 387, one cannot really speak of Ambrose as an ecclesiological influence.¹⁷⁷ Despite the Christian input from Ambrose indicated in the *Confessions*, no distinguishable interest in the church can be identified in the evidence from the period immediately following Augustine's conversion. The *Confessions* itself gives little other indication of Ambrose's influence on Augustine's understanding of Christianity beyond how it affected his *individual* evaluation of it. As Augustine returned to Milan from Cassiciacum, the church itself was not seen as particularly significant, even if it provided the means to a significant end. Yet, this limited view of the church appears to have changed in the course of Augustine's experience of initiation, partly on account of Ambrose's teaching and preaching.

Ambrose would have dominated the pre-baptismal 'scene' in 387 during the weeks preceding Easter; and it is probable that his instruction, preaching, and conduct of the initiation rites of the church helped to consolidate the idea of the church as teacher; a conception which Augustine might have held at Cassiciacum.¹⁷⁸ It is not clear exactly how Augustine conceived his own position under this 'teacher'; but as has been seen, some of the elements of his understanding would have been: to submit in public humility to the authority of the church, thus expressing his need for its cleansing (mediating Christ's); to receive all of the basic 'mysteries' of the church and begin to try and understand them 'spiritually'; and, finally, to identify himself publicly with the church as a Catholic servant of God. In relation to most of the other catechumens,¹⁷⁹ it would have been consistent with his hierarchical view of the Christian community for Augustine to view the institutional church fulfilling its major role of inducting and educating into its basic truths those who were not capable of understanding spiritual reality.¹⁸⁰ In Catholic initiation, the authority of the church was being explained simply. Its basic doctrines were being clearly articulated in a repetitive manner which hinged on acceptance and obedience rather than contemplation and understanding. Indeed, such a view of the church as teacher would have been attractive and obvious for one probably influenced by the perspective that 'Christianity was a sort of

¹⁷⁶ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15 and ch. 1, p. 21-22. All of this was influential in facilitating Augustine's encounter with Catholic Christianity but not with a doctrine of the church.

¹⁷⁷ other obvious sources of possible ecclesial information and emphasis which failed to stimulate Augustine's mind include Simplicianus and Monnica. Augustine was not interested in being involved in a religious community or institution for its own sake, nor in how such community or institution might communicate 'salvation' or instruct towards right living, until he was confident of the veracity of its beliefs.

¹⁷⁸ see ch. 1, p. 15-17, 21; note the presentation of Ambrose as a 'teacher' in *conf.* 5.13.23.

¹⁷⁹ presumably not Alypius or Adeodatus, cf. *conf.* 9.6.14.

¹⁸⁰ *conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15.

Platonism for the masses'.¹⁸¹ In this connection, it is interesting to note Augustine's few comments in regard to the baptismal context in the *Confessions* narrative. In book nine, he wrote, 'We were baptized and the disquiet about our past vanished from us. During those days I found an insatiable and amazing delight in considering the profundity of your purpose for the salvation of the human race' (*conf.* 9.6.14).¹⁸² Almost wistful remembrance of the corporate worship which laced the days following his baptism follows this comment.¹⁸³ For Augustine, who had come through what was by any account an extended and very intellectual process to the truth of the spiritual God who was the creator of and proper end of his being and soul, it was a truly amazing thing to see how the church had been enabled by God to transmit this truth (and the real experience of it) to those who did not and possibly could not grasp it mentally or spiritually.¹⁸⁴

As one of the '*spirituals*' among the neophytes, whom Teske identifies as those who had 'come to a conception of God and the soul as incorporeal realities',¹⁸⁵ Augustine would have approached this teaching with a view to seeing its deeper significance in addition to absorbing it as information. It is clear that the presence in the Catholic fold of people like Ambrose, Simplicianus, and Victorinus, with their education and intellectual caliber, was important to Augustine.¹⁸⁶ His primary interest remained the gaining of understanding about God and the soul, that is, of what to him was 'spiritual understanding'.¹⁸⁷ It must not be forgotten that one of Augustine's crucial discoveries at Milan was of the non-physical reality of spirit.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, the spiritual component of the events at Milan was probably at the forefront of his mind.

¹⁸¹ a view of Victorinus in his later Christian years (H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), 134 n. 3) with which Augustine may have been familiar. It certainly would have been consistent with his hierarchical view of community as seen at Cassiciacum, *cf.* ch. 1, p. 22-24 (though after book seven in the *Confessions* Augustine could never subsume Platonism under Christianity). Essentially, in 387 he felt that the basic insights of Plotinus were contained within (and necessary for) any proper 'understanding' of the Christian faith. This idea continued, in some form, throughout his early Christian years, *cf.* R.J. Teske, '*Homo spiritualis* in St. Augustine's *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*', *SP* 22 (1989), 351; and *uera rel.* 3.3-4.7.

¹⁸² *et baptizati sumus et fugit a nobis sollicitudo uitae praeteritae. nec satiabar illis diebus dulcedine mirabili considerare altitudinem consilii tui super salutem generis humani.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 109; *CCL* 27. 141.

¹⁸³ *conf.* 9.6.14 *ad fin.*-9.7.15.

¹⁸⁴ Augustine will describe such people in 387-388 as the 'children' or 'babies' of the Catholic church, *e.g.* *mor. ecc.* 10.17.

¹⁸⁵ 'i.e., those who have attained some appreciation of Plotinus' doctrine of incorporeal reality'. R.J. Teske, 'Spirituals and Spiritual Interpretation in Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 15 (1984), 71. The bulk of Teske's article, p. 65-81, will be discussed in greater detail in ch. 3 and esp. ch. 4.

¹⁸⁶ *cf. mor. ecc.* 10.17; *cf.* R.J. Teske, *St. Augustine on Genesis*, *FC* 84 (1991), 15.

¹⁸⁷ while he did not use the term in abstract much in the period, the underlying assumption is that God and the soul and all to which proper Christian authority related were real or 'true'.

¹⁸⁸ *cf. conf.* 6.4.5f.; G. Watson, *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul* (1990), 16; and B.D. Jackson, *De Dialectica* (1975), 3.

Still, he would have admired the way in which the church, and on its behalf especially Ambrose, was able to communicate to simple people the end beliefs – naturally not the means to them – which it had taken Augustine three years at Milan to discover for himself.¹⁸⁹

The interaction between Augustine and Ambrose at Milan and its significance (especially pre-conversion), as revealed in the *Confessions*, is well known but it is worth briefly outlining their 'relationship' to the point of the present discussion.¹⁹⁰ Upon Augustine's arrival in Milan as professor of rhetoric late in 384, he became acquainted, if he had not already been before, with the reputation of the bishop and determined to go and listen to Ambrose's preaching as a matter of professional interest.¹⁹¹ Being at this point disillusioned but still somewhat affiliated with the Manichees and increasingly influenced by Academic skepticism, he was impressed by Ambrose's confident and learned oratory.¹⁹² Gradually the bishop's 'subject matter as well as [his] words began to enter [Augustine's] mind' (*conf.* 5.14.24).¹⁹³ Augustine wrote of this experience in the *Confessions*,

Above all, I heard first one, then another, then many difficult passages in the Old Testament scriptures figuratively interpreted, where I, by taking them literally, had found them to kill (2 Cor. 3.6). So after several passages in the Old Testament had been expounded spiritually, I now found fault with that despair of mine, caused by my belief that the law and the prophets could not be defended at all against the mockery of hostile critics (*conf.* 5.14.24).¹⁹⁴

Augustine explicitly said that he heard Genesis 1.26 expounded¹⁹⁵ as well as sermons on the 'Law and the Prophets' in which he 'delighted to hear Ambrose ... saying to the people, as if he were most carefully enunciating a principle of exegesis: "The letter

¹⁸⁹ cf. esp. *conf.* 9.6.14.

¹⁹⁰ *conf.* 5.13.23-9.8.15 *passim*, though the exact nature and importance of this contact is still a point of debate (e.g. the role and date of Ambrose's sermons). Some aspects of this debate will be considered below, specifically in connection with the work of Pierre Courcelle. For general information on Ambrose relevant to Augustinian studies, see the entry 'Ambrosius' by E. Dassmann in *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 1/2 (1986), 270-285. A helpful table of the events in Milan (and Cassiciacum) is found on P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 601-602.

¹⁹¹ *conf.* 5.13.23.

¹⁹² esp. the bishop's defense of the integrity of the Old Testament accounts using allegorical interpretation. Among others see H. Savon, *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le Juif* v. 1-2 (1977), for how Ambrose took on the ideas of allegorical interpretation from the eastern Mediterranean.

¹⁹³ *Cum enim non satagerem discere quae dicebat, sed tantum quemadmodum dicebat audire ... ueniebant in animum meum simul cum uerbis quae diligebam res etiam quas neglegebam, neque enim ea dirimere poteram.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 57; CCL 27. 71. For a sketch of Ambrose's influence on Augustine through sermons (focusing on the period 384-386 and largely based on the *Confessions*) see J. Patout Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 373-386.

¹⁹⁴ *maxime audito uno atque altero et saepius aenigmate soluto de scriptis ueteribus, ubi, cum ad litteram acciperem, occidebar. spiritaliter itaque plerisque illorum librorum locis expositis iam reprehendebam desperationem meam, illam dumtaxat qua credideram legem et prophetas detestantibus atque inridentibus resisti omnino non posse.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 57; CSEL 27. 71 (cf. *ut. cred.* 8.20).

¹⁹⁵ *conf.* 6.3.4.

kills, the spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3.6)' (*conf.* 6.4.6).¹⁹⁶ Augustine had been adversely affected by the coarseness of the Old Testament when he first read it in earnest at the age of 19.¹⁹⁷ This was compounded by his background under the Manichees who rejected the Hebrew scriptures as representative of an evil God.¹⁹⁸ After listening to Ambrose, Augustine soon became a catechumen of the Catholic church in 384¹⁹⁹ – doubtless to the disappointment of those Manichees who had helped secure his nomination to Milan.²⁰⁰ This was also due to Monnica's arrival in Milan and her intense involvement in Ambrose's congregation, as well as what Brown calls a 'politic gesture of conformity'²⁰¹ on Augustine's part.

Between his decision to become a Catholic catechumen and August 386, it is difficult to be exact about the interaction between the two men. The *Confessions* notes that though Augustine had many questions which he would have liked to ask Ambrose, he was unable to do so on account of the bishop's busy schedule.²⁰² There is no doubt that Augustine heard a considerable number of Ambrose's sermons during this period. However, it is virtually impossible to date those extant accurately enough to tell which, if any, Augustine would have heard.²⁰³ O'Donnell summarizes Mandouze's proposed pattern of Augustine's hearing and reading neo-Platonic 'sources' at Milan as follows:

Beginning of 386	Ambrose, <i>de Iacob et uita beata</i>
Holy Week, 386	Ambrose, <i>exameron</i> ²⁰⁴
May 386	Ambrose, <i>de Isaac uel anima; de bono mortis</i>
June/July 386	Porphyry, <i>Philosophy from Oracles</i>
June/July 386	<i>platoniorum libri</i>

¹⁹⁶ *Gaudebam etiam quod uetera scripta legis et prophetarum ... et tamquam regulam diligentissime commendaret, saepe in popularibus sermonibus suis dicentem Ambrosium laetus audiebam, 'littera occidit, spiritus autem uiuificat'.* O'Donnell, v. 1: 61; CCL 27: 77. Chadwick (*Confessions* (1991), 94 n. 8) notes that 2 Cor. 3.6 is 'cited in this sense by Ambrose, *Sermon* 19' but is corrected on this point by D.F. Wright, 'Augustine: His Exegesis and Hermeneutics', in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of its Interpretations* v. I/1 (to appear), 43 n. 3 (in ms.), who clarifies that 'this sermon is by Maximius of Turin, s. 67.4 (CCL 23, 282), see CPL 180'.

¹⁹⁷ cf. *conf.* 3.5.9.

¹⁹⁸ see G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 59-61, for Augustine's rejection of the Old Testament and attraction to Manichaeism.

¹⁹⁹ *conf.* 5.14.25. He was not yet fully convinced that the Catholic faith was true but viewed it as his best hope for reaching truth if such was possible (*conf.* 5.14.24).

²⁰⁰ cf. *conf.* 5.13.23.

²⁰¹ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 81: 'It was a politic gesture of conformity; and, once a catechumen, he could have postponed indefinitely the decisive step of being baptized' (reinforced by J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 340: 'Convenient conversions at court were not new to Ambrose').

²⁰² *conf.* 6.3.3 and 6.11.18.

²⁰³ see discussion below; for Ambrosian chronology generally, see J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 153-176; R. Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise* (1968), 35-42; and J.R. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'empire romain* (1935), l'appendice III: Essai de chronologie ambrosienne, p. 480-556. More recently and concerned specifically with Ambrose's sermons, see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* (1992), v. 1: xxxviii, n. 58; v. 2: 34, 48, 313, 325, 338, 343, 346-347, 387, 397, 400-401, 469, 475; and v. 3: 68, 107.

²⁰⁴ O'Donnell notes that this is 'a particularly controversial assignment'.

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Paul.²⁰⁵

The presence and importance of Ambrose's sermons in this summary are obvious.²⁰⁶ In this connection, O'Donnell accurately observes that

Much debate since Courcelle has been concerned with identifying the textual sources [from Ambrose] as closely as possible, and with dating Augustine's contacts with them. Better to follow the example of Mandouze, 476-8, who summarizes concisely and lucidly the most ambitious attempts to provide a schedule for Augustine's readings (and hearings) of Platonic ideas, while setting that exercise as essentially secondary.²⁰⁷

Uncertainty over possible examples of Ambrose's influence on Augustine certainly remains.²⁰⁸ The important requirement here is to determine which extant writings of Ambrose *may* be illustrative of the kind of material (teaching, preaching, etc.) to which Augustine would have been exposed. Several possible sources among the bishop's sermons will be suggested but always with the intention of keeping the process of specific identification 'secondary'.²⁰⁹

Cassiciacum: August 386–February 387

Previously, in searching for ecclesiological influences, it was seen that while the Cassiciacum writings indicate that Augustine probably gained insight into a kind of neo-Platonizing Christianity from Ambrose, the *Dialogues* give no clear indication of similar ecclesiological influence.²¹⁰ Indeed, Augustine's famous conversion, with its intellectual and moral strands, was an individual affair unconnected with a corporate or ecclesiological commitment, at least as presented in the *Confessions*.²¹¹ As discussed

²⁰⁵ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 418.

²⁰⁶ as is the connection between Ambrose and neo-Platonism.

²⁰⁷ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 418.

²⁰⁸ see n. 229.

²⁰⁹ see below, p. 61f. and ch. 3, p. 100f., for such discussion of Ambrose's writings. On the philosophy of Ambrose's sermons and his works generally, see G. Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie* (1974), 22-175 (esp. 61-85 on 'Les «sermons photiniens»' and 'L'Exameron').

²¹⁰ e.g. motivation that ecclesiastical involvement, not just submission, was necessary to the *beata uita*. There are hints in the allusions to preparation for baptism at Cassiciacum (see n. 1 above) but to link this with the 'writings' of Ambrose (*sol.* 2.14.26, see ch. 1, p. 15-16 and n. 117) mentioned there as catechetical writings remains speculative (even if tempting). Even if such a catechesis was present, it need not indicate any different motivations toward initiation into the church than have been put forward above, i.e. as relating to more than a necessary personal step.

²¹¹ esp. *conf.* 5.10.19-8.12.29. Augustine was affected in his progress by various other individuals and groups but the decisions and pursuits he undertook were personally motivated, not a result of being in a particular group or community. The lack of connection mentioned here does not deny that at points in the *Confessions* account Augustine compressed his conversion and baptism into almost one event (*cf. conf.* 9.3.6), but it is clear that the decision to receive baptism was separate from and recognizably later than his garden 'conversion' (*cf. conf.* 9.4.12 *ad fin.*-9.5.13). The *Dialogues* support this (see *Acad.* 2.2.3-2.2.6 and *ord.* 2.9.27), but, as discussed above, the issue of when it first was that Augustine viewed Christian 'conversion' as incomplete until baptism remains uncertain. It is possible that it preceded his conversion (*conf.* 8.2.3-5), but it is also possible that it emerged later at Cassiciacum.

in chapter one, shortly after Augustine's conversion in Milan, he retired from the city to a friend's villa at Cassiciacum, and it is from there that the historian first encounters extant textual evidence from his hand; four works known as the *Dialogues*.²¹² The basic picture presented by these writings is of a philosophic retreat with (mostly personal) religious elements and a strong communal emphasis. The paradigm for the community's life-style was fundamentally that of a life of philosophic *otium*.²¹³ While the *Dialogues* are primarily concerned with 'philosophy', it is important not to ignore the religious aspects of ancient philosophy by adopting anachronistic perspectives and definitions. At Cassiciacum, Augustine made a significant number of comments about individual religious experience and development as well as that of the community.²¹⁴ Yet, significantly, in the *Dialogues* a necessary connection between the Christian experience of life and institutional Christianity is lacking.²¹⁵

No explicit mention of the church and only a few references to Ambrose, none of which has an explicitly ecclesial connection, were made in the *Dialogues*. These important few references confirm Ambrose's significance for Augustine's earliest individual Christian development but give no clear indication that this influence had an ecclesiological dimension.²¹⁶ The only other possible points of contact with the church that emerge in the *Dialogues* are Augustine's communicated intent (almost as an aside) of being baptized and his deference to the authority of the Christian 'mysteries'

²¹² for a summary of the position adopted on the considerable debate from earlier in this century over whether the *Dialogues* undermine the historicity of the *Confessions* (and for references to the literature), see ch. 1, p. 2-4. In short, I do not believe that they do; rather, the works from Cassiciacum provide an important filter through which information from the *Confessions* must be understood.

²¹³ i.e. of 'directed leisure'. A reading of the *Dialogues* communicates a interesting blend of relaxation (various activities pursued, with no sense of urgency, collective baths and meals, a somewhat loose schedule) and intensity (the sense of the cruciality of the discovery of truth in philosophical discussions, restlessness, sleepless nights, etc.).

²¹⁴ including: his prayer (*sol.* 1.1.2-4; *ord.* 1.8.22); scripture reading and citation (*Acad.* 2.2.5 and *passim*, cf. ch. 1, Table 1); and collective praise and prayer (*ord.* 1.8.25; *beata u.* 4.34, 36).

²¹⁵ the retreat itself seems to underline this point. A retreat from the professional and ecclesiastical communities of Milan was a natural step for Augustine following his conversion (as opposed, for example, to emulating Monnica's intense church attendance and involvement, cf. *conf.* 6.1.1-6.2.2), as was the writing of philosophical treatises dedicated to individuals with similar interests in the topics discussed, not religious tracts dedicated to ecclesiastical figures like Ambrose or Simplicianus.

²¹⁶ i.e. that it encouraged Augustine's thought about, discussion of, or participation in the 'institutional' church. Possible indications of ecclesial ideas at Cassiciacum exist, such as: the few allusions to Ambrose's discourses and the hymns and activities of his church (*beata u.* 1.4; 4.36; *sol.* 2.14.26). Yet, they are very secondary, at best suggesting a loose dependence on the church. They grew out of Augustine's individual Christian development and study as well as his normal life among a Christian group of people. The point is not that the information which Augustine received earlier from Ambrose was devoid of ecclesial aspects or emphases, but simply that these aspects did not meet with Augustine's attention or priority. His ignorance of even Antony until just before his conversion, or indeed of the monastery outside Milan's city walls under the care of Ambrose (cf. *conf.* 8.6.14) and the short time between his conversion and departure to Cassiciacum further suggest that intentional imitation of organized ascetic communities of a sophisticated kind did not occur at the villa.

(*mysteriis*).²¹⁷ These are suggestive, but they are best understood as indicating an understanding of the need to receive an official bestowal of the church's authority in order to truly be a Christian²¹⁸ rather than indicating any intent towards continued involvement in or need for the church. A theological concept of the church or a doctrine of the church was certainly absent from his discussion, interests, and outlook. O'Donnell has correctly emphasized the link between Augustine's intellectual and moral decisions in a cult matrix.²¹⁹ Yet, Augustine's understanding of what religion and cult consisted of should not be confined. Cultic acts of ritual observance may have been important (those of initiation certainly were); but for Augustine, regular spiritual devotion or religion, 'spiritual cult', was much more between God and the individual (or small group, such as in the Ostia vision) than between a congregation and God. This kind of personal religion was still mystical (for example, the ascent of the soul) and entailed no less intention and discipline to 'perform' than did corporate religion.²²⁰

Back at Milan, 387

In *On Order* (2.9.27), Augustine alluded to the fact that he was preparing for baptism. Prior to the Paschal season, in late February of 387, he and his companions returned to Milan for this purpose.²²¹ Yet, it is difficult to ascertain what exactly Augustine anticipated in baptism.²²² He certainly had not witnessed the ceremonies before and though he knew of Victorinus' baptism and had heard something about the rites²²³ he probably had little idea of what would occur.²²⁴ However, if he had not done so

²¹⁷ *beata u.* 3.18; *ord.* 2.9.27; cf. Appendix B, p. 302-303.

²¹⁸ cf. the Victorinus narrative, *conf.* 8.2.4-5; 8.4.9-8.5.10.

²¹⁹ cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii. Indeed, he presents the 'cultic' nature of life in late antiquity as pervasive.

²²⁰ in this connection, one might contrast Monnica's Christian devotion as represented in *conf.* 6.1.1-6.2.2 (the summary of which reads, 'In good works "fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12. 11) she was habitually in the church' (*conf.* 6.2.2: *qua in bonis operibus tam feruens spiritu frequentabat ecclesiam*. O'Donnell v. 1. 59, CCL 27.75; cf. *conf.* 9.7.15)) and the devotion portrayed later in the *Confessions*' account of her life (*conf.* 9.8.17-9.9.22), esp. together with Augustine after they have been 'bound together' in God as Augustine received baptism (*conf.* 9.8.17) (which found its resolution in spiritual devotion, i.e. the mutual ascent to the spiritual presence of God in the 'vision at Ostia' (*conf.* 9.10.23-25). Neither of the later descriptions mention activity in the church.

²²¹ cf. *conf.* 9.5.13-6.14 and O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432-433.

²²² the two references from the *Dialogues* indicate that Augustine knew exorcism would take place but he only spoke in general terms of the 'sacred rite(s)', for which he was in preparation, under the rubric of the Christian 'mysteries'. The information about Victorinus has been discussed above.

²²³ cf. *beata u.* 3.18.

²²⁴ J.J. O'Donnell's comments (*Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxviii.) on the centrality of 'cult' in late antique religion (including Christianity) and the secrecy with which cultic (or, with a more favorable tone, liturgical) rites were held are noteworthy (see also v. 1. 107). He also observes that despite the fact that 'the cult act that was the centre of his ordained ministry', Augustine's own *corpus* of over five million words nowhere describes the act of baptism (p. xxix). One quite properly wonders how scrupulously the *disciplina arcani* was kept, but it was the period of its zenith and 'Ambrose was strict' in this connection (O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 107). According *Encyclopedia*, Ferguson

before, Augustine certainly now encountered the importance of the church in the liturgical rites of fourth-century Latin Christianity under Ambrose.

There were a number of different contexts in which Augustine would have had contact with Ambrose. Several of the possible media for this contact in the 'baptismal' events at Milan have been touched on previously.²²⁵ Yet, the only medium which can be examined first hand are Ambrose's extant sermons. Henry Chadwick notes that

Ambrose's influence was not through any intimacy of personal contact, but through his discourses in the pulpit, which taught Augustine a very different way of interpreting the Bible. The sermons also presented a Christian theology that combined aversion from pagan religion with a large ingredient of Neoplatonism.²²⁶

During 385/386, it appears that Augustine had been attending Ambrose's sermons with regularity.²²⁷ This would have certainly been the case in Milan in 387. Therefore, certain sermons of Ambrose must be evaluated in order to determine those which Augustine might have heard during his stay at Milan and which therefore hold clues to Ambrose's communication in 387.²²⁸

In evaluating specific sermons in this way, above all, the discussion follows the work of Pierre Courcelle.²²⁹ The first work Courcelle examined was Ambrose's *Hexameron*.²³⁰ Since it consists of sermons given on the days of Holy Week, it serves equally well as a starting point in this discussion. Courcelle has shown how this group of sermons functions as an extended commentary on Genesis 1.26, and he believes that as such it corresponds to the comments in *Confessions* 6.3.4.²³¹ He continues, 'Cette attention prêtée par Augustin aux sermons d'Ambroise sur l'*Hexameron* me semble

(1990), 269, the 'rule of secrecy' was possibly the result of the secret rites of the mystery religions, reverence for the central rites of the Christian faith, and the problems posed by persecution. Its practice (restricting the unbaptized from the eucharist and not speaking to them of the sacraments) was observed principally in the fourth and early fifth centuries.

²²⁵ including basic instruction, services, sermons, and the rites themselves. See the discussion of the 'baptismal' activities above, p. 49f., and, in more detailed connection to Ambrose, in ch. 3.

²²⁶ H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxi; although this is primarily a reference to Augustine before his conversion, it holds for the period in 387 as well.

²²⁷ see *conf.* 6.3.4 and P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 96.

²²⁸ the goal is to discern the type of ecclesiological elements which Augustine may have grasped (or at least heard). In this chapter, sources (*i.e.* sermons) of such information will be identified. In ch. 3, the ecclesial aspects will be drawn out.

²²⁹ esp. his *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 93-138: 'Aux sermons d'Ambroise', as well as *Les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1963), 31. Considerable caution needs to be observed, however. For example, G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 76 n. 1, lists C. Mohrmann, W. Theiler, and J.J. O'Meara among those who have rejected Courcelle's dating at points. The specific claims must be evaluated, but fortunately it is not necessary for this discussion to fix definite dates, just probable ones. P. Courcelle's point: 'Ainsi, plusieurs sermons d'Ambroise ont initié Augustin à certains aspects essentiels de la doctrine plotinienne', remains valid regardless of dating quibbles or disagreement over exact dependencies; cf. A.D. Nock, *JEH* 2 (1951), 226 (225-228).

²³⁰ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 93-106.

²³¹ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 99-100.

confirmée par un autre passage des *Confessions*'.²³² Here, Courcelle is referring to what Augustine was 'told' (*conf.* 7.2.5) about the origin of evil; namely, 'that the free choice of the will is the reason why we do wrong and suffer your [God's] just judgment'.²³³ He notes that even Alfaric conceded that this might indicate Ambrose's influence and that it reflects 'one of the essential principles of Ambrose's doctrine'.²³⁴ Courcelle concludes, 'Des nombreuses références alléguées, l'une surtout me semble digne d'être retenue: celle du commentaire sur l'*Hexameron*; car il s'agit d'un développement expressément antimanichéen, prononcé pendant le séjour d'Augustin, et qui coïncide avec ses propres expressions'.²³⁵ Thus, he suggests that the way in which the *Hexameron* fits with Augustine's emergence from Manichaeism as related in the *Confessions* is so suggestive as to indicate that in fact these sermons provided the basis for some of Augustine's steps in this regard. With respect to the dating of the *Hexameron*, Courcelle is 'less sure' about those arguments which assign the sermons to 387 opting instead for those suggesting that it represents sermons from the Lenten season in 386.²³⁶ 'Nous pouvons donc retenir comme très probable que, le lundi saint 30 mars et le samedi saint 4 avril 386, Augustin a été intimement touché par les sermons d'Ambroise relatifs au libre arbitre et à la nature incorporelle de Dieu'.²³⁷

Courcelle proceeds to consider the sermons *De Isaac uel anima* and *De bono mortis* and establishes beyond doubt the Plotinian nature of Ambrose's discourse with numerous parallels to Plotinus' *Enneads*.²³⁸ Yet, after this lengthy discussion he admits that the date of these two sermons is 'sadly difficult to establish with certainty'. He notes that 'the general opinion is with' the Maurists who placed these works around 387-389, though Palanque dated them to 391.²³⁹ His own opinion is that these two sermons were heard by Augustine in 386.²⁴⁰ Other scholars have proceeded upon the

²³² P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 99.

²³³ *Et intendebar ut cernerem quod audiebam, liberum uoluntatis arbitrium causam esse ut male faceremus et rectum iudicium tuum ut pateremur.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 75; CCL 27. 94; cf. *conf.* 7.2.4.

²³⁴ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 100.

²³⁵ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 100 (cf. 97).

²³⁶ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 101.

²³⁷ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 102 (see also 133). J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 48) generally supports Courcelle and states that the sermons were 'delivered by Ambrose, probably during Holy Week, perhaps in 386'. Dating to 387 has been best defended by G. Madec, in *Saint Ambroise* (1974), 72. Thus, the *Hexameron* possibly corresponds to the baptismal period/process discussed above but probably in the year before Augustine's initiation, i.e. 386 – when he was still engulfed in a very personal and individualistic evaluation of Christian truth and not likely to have been interested in ecclesiological information. Still, this series of sermons is of undoubted use for providing suggestions of the ecclesiological ideas presented by Ambrose in 386-387 and will be examined in that connection in ch. 3.

²³⁸ see P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 106-138 *passim*.

²³⁹ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 122.

²⁴⁰ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 124 (apparently the only point of justification is on p. 132 and n. 3). J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992)) agrees saying that *de Isaac uel anima* was 'preached while Augustine was at Milan' (p. 475) and that 'Augustine had almost

connection between Augustine's attraction to neo-Platonism and Ambrose's sermons identified by Courcelle. Brown states,

Ambrose may well have taken this new movement [*i.e.* neo-Platonism] into account at much the same time as Augustine. It is possible that Ambrose preached the series of sermons 'On Isaac and the Soul' and 'On Jacob and the Happy Life'²⁴¹ in the early months of 387.²⁴²

In the *Confessions* (9.5.13), Augustine wrote,

By letter I informed your bishop, the holy man Ambrose, of my past errors and my present desire [to be baptized], asking what he would especially recommend me to read ... to make me readier and fitter to receive so great a grace. He told me to read the prophet Isaiah, ... But I did not understand the first passage of the book and thought the whole would be equally obscure. So I put it to one side to be resumed when I had had more practice in the Lord's style of language.²⁴³

Some have noted that this may be an indication of the fact that Ambrose was going to preach on Isaiah during the period of catechetical instruction. For example, D.F. Wright comments that 'Ambrose may well have expounded Isaiah in Milan in 386 or early 387, and perhaps intended Augustine to [be] prepared for pre-baptismal catechesis, from Isaiah'.²⁴⁴ In his general discussion of Ambrose's sermons, Courcelle basically ignores this 'homily', noting simply that in it 'le néo-platonisme d'Ambroise serait plus évident encore';²⁴⁵ but later he 'conjectures' that Ambrose may have preached on Isaiah in 'the first months of 387 ... before Augustine'.²⁴⁶ These suggestions concerning Isaiah seem probable though some caution must remain. Augustine's explanation of why Ambrose might have recommended this prophet to him: 'I think because more clearly than others he [Isaiah] foretold the gospel and the calling of the Gentiles' (*conf.* 9.5.13), raises some question over the proposal. One might have expected a more direct reference to catechesis if Ambrose had preached, or based instruction, on Isaiah during the time of Augustine's initiation. Again, regardless of its exact date, its probable connection with catechetical preparation and chronological proximity to the years of Augustine's sojourn in Milan would make *Exp. Esaiæ* one of

certainly heard (Ambrose's) sermon of 386, *de Isaac vel anima* (p. 34, essentially repeated on p. 397 in an 'implied link' from *conf.* 7.1.2). He also says (p. 387) that '*bono mort.* dates from around this time as well'.

²⁴¹ 'qui est du debut de 386' in Courcelle's opinion, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 98.

²⁴² P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 125; cf. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 106-122.

²⁴³ *et insinuai per litteras antistiti tuo, uiro sancto Ambrosio, pristinos errores meos et praesens uotum meum, ut percipiendae tantae gratiae paratior aptiorque fierem. at ille iussit Esaiam prophetam, credo, quod prae ceteris euangelii uocationisque gentium sit praenuntiator apertior. uerum tamen ego primam huius lectionem non intellegens totumque talem arbitrans distuli repetendum exercitatio in dominico eloquio.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 108; CCL 27. 140.

²⁴⁴ D.F. Wright, 'Augustine: His Exegesis and Hermeneutics', in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament* v. I/1 (to appear), 4 (in ms.), referring to R. Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise* (1968), 37, and P. Courcelle (see n. 235 above) – a point also alluded to in J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 104.

²⁴⁵ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 137.

²⁴⁶ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 215.

those works which represents the type of things Augustine heard from Ambrose in 387. Unfortunately, it does not survive intact.²⁴⁷

In summary, it has been said that it was 'the great achievement of Courcelle's *Recherches* (98-132) to have traced the surviving sermons of Ambrose that can reasonably be dated to the time of Augustine's sojourn in Milan, and their echoes in Augustine'.²⁴⁸ O'Donnell lists some of these findings: '*Iacob* 1.4.13 (early 386), *interpell. Iob et David* 1.5.12 (June 387), in *Luc.* 3.28;²⁴⁹ 6.29; 9.1; and 9.37 (387)'. He proceeds to note that 'The other most important works that Augustine was exposed to were the *de Isaac vel anima* (386) and the *de bono mortis* (386)'.²⁵⁰ Uncertainty remains over dating but not over the value of these sermons for indicating ideas which Augustine may have received:

Even where, as in the last case [*i.e.* the note that *apol. proph. David* might be from 387],²⁵¹ we cannot be sure that Augustine heard the surviving sermon(s), the presence of the doctrine in Ambrose's work is at least suggestive of what Augustine could have heard in sermons that were not transmitted to us.²⁵²

Basically, the only unquestionable information remains that Augustine heard catechetical addresses and those given at special services for *competentes* and neophytes.²⁵³ The *experience* of the church at Milan has been addressed and possible sources of ecclesial inspiration or motivation suggested. It remains for the decisions and writings undertaken on the way from Milan to Thagaste to illuminate what Augustine *absorbed* of the church from this first concentrated ecclesiastical exposure.

²⁴⁷ see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 104; and J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 165, for comments on *Exp. Esaiæ*. Some fragments are collected in *CCL* 14 (1957), 403-408. In the following chapter, three representatives of Ambrose's surviving sermons which are both chronologically proximate and helpful in identifying specific Ambrosian ecclesial emphases will be examined: the *Hexameron*, *De Isaac uel anima*, and *De Iacob*.

²⁴⁸ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325.

²⁴⁹ and elsewhere, O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 394: 'Augustine probably heard [*exp. Luc.*] while in Milan' or (p. 469) *exp. Luc.* was 'preached during or shortly after Augustine's time in Milan'. Courcelle (*Recherches*, 98) describes the series of sermons as 'from 387'.

²⁵⁰ however, 'their relevance is platonico-philosophical rather than exegetico-theological', J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325 (see also 400-401).

²⁵¹ *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325 – a somewhat questionable assertion; see F. Clause, 'La datation de l'*Apologia prophetæ David* et l'*Apologia David altera*', *SPM* 7 v. 2 (1917), 168-193, which argues for the year 390, after the Thessalonica affair (see p. 185 and 192).

²⁵² J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325.

²⁵³ see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 108-109: '[During the] week from Easter to the following Sunday ... the newly baptized remained in a place of honour in the church, wearing their baptismal garments, with daily services and sermons for their benefit ... The importance of this week may be calculated from the numerous sermons of Augustine that survive belonging to these days'. Chapter three will discuss Ambrose's influence with a brief consideration of the ecclesiological aspects that can be found in materials from Ambrose on the creed and catechesis; specifically, elements from *De sacramentis*, *De mysteriis*, and from the *Explanatio symboli* will be evaluated for insight into the kind of instruction Augustine would have received under Ambrose.

CHAPTER THREE

ECCLESIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE JOURNEY BACK TO AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

In the works Augustine wrote between his departure from Milan (387) and his arrival in Thagaste (388), there is a sudden and significant¹ emergence of explicit references to the 'church' (*ecclesia*). In previous writings there had been no such explicit mention or any discussion of the church. Even though it can be shown (as in the preceding chapter) that Augustine was exposed to many particular ecclesial influences in Milan, it is not possible to state definitively how, or to what extent, he absorbed these influences. It is only with the period from summer 387 to autumn 388, then, that direct evidence from Augustine's hand emerges concerning his view of the church.

The church emerges in these works as something which Augustine was beginning to view theologically. He certainly regarded it, in practical terms, as providing an overarching framework for his actions within the universal Christian community. The subject matter alone of *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* shows that he began writing as a Catholic in an apologetic manner for the church. Activity in the framework created by the church did not mean, however, that Augustine was actively involved in the institutional church. His exact involvement (or even presence) at the institutional level is uncertain during this period. Indeed, Augustine probably remained at least somewhat aloof from the formal side of the church during 387-388.² His own program of Christian living and philosophic exploration/contemplation, *in* the church universal and *affiliated* to the institutions of the church, took priority.³ Consequently, this chapter will first trace the emergence of these earliest concrete ideas of the church in

¹ both in quality as well as in quantity.

² O. Perler refers to Augustine's intense involvement in the liturgical life of the church at Rome in *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 147 (cf. below p. 112 esp. n. 307 and n. 360 for text and comments). His statements might be true, but the evidence from the period does not allow firm conclusions about such possibilities (e.g. there are no direct references to liturgical attendance).

³ undoubtedly, another element which contributed to Augustine's lack of direct involvement in the institutional church was his desire to preserve his life of *otium*. For more discussion of this element and the evidence that it remained significant at Thagaste, see ch. 4.

the context in which they emerged, as well as the role they played in Augustine's general development during the journey to Thagaste. It will be seen that Augustine's earliest articulated view of the church focused on its role as the teacher of all Christians, being as it was, universal and the 'mother of Christians' (*mor. ecc.* 30.62).⁴

In the *Confessions*, we read that around Easter Augustine, his family members, and some African friends (*ex nostro municipio*)⁵ decided that they would return to North Africa and live together in the service of God.⁶ During the summer of 387, they set off from Milan on this journey.⁷ Among the travelers were: Monnica, Adeodatus, Augustine's brother Navigius, Alypius, and Evodius.⁸ This group was only a part of the rather intimate circle of friends Augustine had embraced at Milan. There were others such as the group of friends who had discussed the idea of setting up a philosophic community in Milan approximately two years earlier;⁹ and also those who, together, had decided that Augustine's conversion and intention toward baptism should be kept quiet in 386 during the final weeks before the vintage vacation.¹⁰ Finally, it is clear that his close associations included almost all those who went with Augustine to Cassiciacum.¹¹ Certainly his circle of friends at Milan did not have sharp boundaries (consider *e.g.* Verecundus)¹² as it was based on natural affiliations; nor did it confine Augustine's spiritual interaction (*e.g.* his visits to Ambrose and especially to Simplicianus).¹³ Still, there was a nucleus of North Africans whose principal orbit was around Augustine and whose intellectual and religious interests were similar to, if not stimulated by, his own. These, of course, stood in addition to his family members. It was from this African clique that the members of Augustine's traveling party came.

⁴ *ecclesia catholica, mater Christianorum uerissima*. CSEL 90. 65.

⁵ it is worth noting the possible connotation of similar nationality in this use of *municipio*, for which 'fellow country-person' is one possible rendering. Perhaps the meaning here is simply 'from Thagaste'.

⁶ *conf.* 9.8.17 (see n. 15 for text); *cf.* also *conf.* 9.2.4 *ad fin.*

⁷ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 145; p. 145-147 discuss the 'voyage' of 387 from Milan to Rome to Ostia and back to Rome.

⁸ listed by G. Bonner in *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 96. Nebridius also seems to have joined the party, though later (*cf.* Bonner, 107).

⁹ including Romanianus *conf.* 6.14.24, *cf. Acad.* 2.2.4; an attempt which J.J. O'Donnell places in 'perhaps late 385'; *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 380.

¹⁰ *conf.* 9.2.2: *consilium ergo nostrum erat coram te, coram hominibus autem nisi nostris non erat*. O'Donnell, v. 1. 103; CCL 27. 134. Chadwick (*Confessions* (1991), 156) draws out this idea of a coherent 'circle' so far in his translation as to say 'Our plan was formed with your knowledge but was not publicly known, except to our intimate circle' (italics mine).

¹¹ see ch. 1, p. 8, for a list of those present at the villa. There was certainly some overlap between these three exemplary groupings.

¹² a non-African professional colleague who lent Augustine his villa for the retreat at Cassiciacum and whom Nebridius worked under at Milan. He did not, however, feel able to enter the inner, baptized ring of Augustine's circle; *cf. conf.* 8.6.13; 9.3.5-9.3.6 (esp. *ad fin.*); and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 93. Ponticianus would be another example.

¹³ *cf. conf.* 6.3.3-6.3.4 and *conf.* 8.1.1-8.2.3f. respectively.

Evodius¹⁴ joined this party when he was baptized shortly after Easter. The *Confessions* records,

So you made Evodius a *member of our circle*, a young man from my home town. When he was a civil servant he was converted to you before we were. He was baptized and resigned his post *on taking up your service*. We were together and by a holy decision *resolved to live together*. We looked for a place *where we could be of most use in your service*; all of us agreed on a move back to Africa (italics mine, *conf.* 9.8.17).¹⁵

It is not possible to discern the nature of this group any further nor what exactly was intended by 'living in the service of God'.¹⁶ Regardless, the journey back to North Africa would take over a year. By the end of that time only a portion of the cadre from Milan would reach Thagaste, where Augustine and his companions were to settle. Monnica, of course, died *en route* at Ostia.¹⁷ Nebridius (who had also been absent from Cassiciacum) would opt to stay in Carthage at his estate.¹⁸ Yet those whose baptism of 387 is described in the *Confessions* (i.e. Augustine, Alypius, Adeodatus, and Evodius) did remain together in God's 'service'.¹⁹

The journey south across the Mediterranean saw changes not only in the composition of the group around Augustine but also in the Christian understanding and exposure of its members. He and his companions encountered, especially at Rome, a number of significant Christian influences, ideas, and groups, with a similar but slightly different tone from what they had experienced in the church at Milan during the Lenten season.²⁰ At the same time, Augustine was fresh from the stimulation of his baptism and catechetical instruction. As such, he was probably inspired to continue and enlarge the manner of Christian living which he had adopted following his conversion (i.e. seeking after understanding of God and his spiritual truth) and to

¹⁴ who was later in this period given the role of interlocutor in two of Augustine's dialogues: *quant. and lib. arb.*

¹⁵ *consociasti nobis et Euodium iuuenem ex nostro municipio. qui cum agens in rebus militaret, prior nobis ad te conuersus est et baptizatus et relictā militiā saeculari accinctus in tuā. simul eramus, simul habitaturi placito sancto. quaerebamus quisnam locus nos utilius haberet seruientes tibi; pariter remeabamus in Africā.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 110; CCL 27. 142-143.

¹⁶ it must be said that there was a sense in which all neophytes were called to live in special devotion to God; see below, p. 94-97, for examples of this in Ambrose's explanation of the baptismal rites. Discussion on the concept/designation of *serui dei* is taken up in ch. 4, p. 175-180.

¹⁷ see *conf.* 9.11.27-9.13.37.

¹⁸ G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 107. See ch. 4, p. 149 n. 112 and p. 154-156, for examples of the illuminating correspondence between Nebridius and Augustine after their return to North Africa (i.e. *ep.* 5-12 and 14).

¹⁹ in the mind of its contemporary readers, the return to Africa in the *Confessions* might have stood in contrast to the expected return to the province in possession of some distinguished position, as Augustine's training and progress had promised. It is probable that the actual return to Africa (with the loss of some close Christian contacts at Milan) indicates a great desire not to be put off a course of life so preciously attained by even Christian earthly ties.

²⁰ see below, p. 116-117, for some examples of the various Christian groupings present in Rome.

which he had committed himself in becoming a baptized believer.²¹ Augustine's extant writings from the trip to Africa confirm this conclusion. They reveal that, as before, he remained convinced of the usefulness of the liberal disciplines and neo-Platonic conceptions as tools for gaining Christian (*i.e.*, in his mind, true) understanding. More significantly, however, Augustine's first usage of the word *ecclesia* occurs in these writings.²² This new usage of *ecclesia* was indicative of a new area of thinking for Augustine, a new framework for his life as a Christian, and a new element for consideration amidst his general intellectual and practical undertakings.

The appearance of specific ideas about the church in 387/388 raises again the issue of the significance of the period in Milan as a point of inspiration and/or origin for these ideas. Despite all of the suggestive elements and the ecclesiastical experiences he had at Milan, the evidence makes it difficult to know how or what Augustine absorbed in 387 from Ambrose's church. Nevertheless, it is possible to piece together an understanding of this time from Augustine's works of the subsequent period 387-388 by considering the emphases in them which parallel the experiences at Milan (especially as illuminated by Ambrose). This task, with specific treatment of several Ambrosian texts, will be undertaken following the establishment of Augustine's earliest ideas of the church from 387/388. The time in Milan – in the presence of bishop Ambrose, his Christian friends, and in attendance at church (*e.g.* finishing catechetical instruction, undergoing baptism, attending special services, etc.) – is confirmed by this exercise as a real ecclesiological 'baptism' and the spark for Augustine's thought about and orientation towards the church: institutional and universal, which first emerged in 387/388.

THE TEXTS

Before turning to Augustine's writings it is necessary to clarify exactly what was written during 387-388, between Milan and Thagaste. According to Augustine's *Review*, during the time between his stay at Cassiciacum and his arrival at Thagaste he wrote: *On the Immortality of the Soul* and the beginnings of the *libri disciplinarum* (in Milan); *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*²³ and *On the Morals of the Manichaeans*,²⁴ *The Greatness of the Soul*, and at least book one of *On Free Will* (all in

²¹ see below, p. 87-100, for discussion of the elements in Ambrose's presentations of the baptismal rites and creed which might have particularly stimulated Augustine.

²² see below, p. 72-73, and Appendix B, p. 279f. and 289f., for summaries and discussions of the frequency of this and other significant terms from 386-early 391.

²³ hereafter *On the Morals*.

²⁴ hereafter *On Manichaean Morals*.

Rome).²⁵ However, in this case the *Review* is only partially accurate.²⁶ Both *On the Morals* (33.70)²⁷ and *On Manichaeian Morals* (20.74)²⁸ speak of having been in Rome.²⁹ In fact, all these works were begun before Augustine returned to Africa;³⁰ but a careful consideration of the chronological issues involved shows that only *On the Immortality of the Soul* and *The Greatness of the Soul* were completed before his return.³¹ Particular arguments relating to specific texts and evaluations of the amount completed before the return to North Africa will be presented in due course, but in general the following table summarizes the chronology which has been adopted.³²

Table 2. Chronology of Augustine's works between his baptism to his return to Thagaste

ORDER OF INCEPTION		ORDER OF COMPLETION
In Augustine's <i>Review</i> ³³	Present Evaluation ³⁴	Present Evaluation
<i>imm. an.</i> (Milan)	<i>imm. an.</i> (spring, 387)	<i>imm. an.</i> (387)
<i>mor. ecc.</i> , <i>mor. Man.</i> (Rome)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> (387/388)	<i>quant.</i> (387/388)
<i>quant.</i> (Rome)	<i>quant.</i> (387/388)	<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> (388/389)
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1, Rome)	<i>mor. Man.</i> (387/388)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> , <i>mor. Man.</i> (388/389)
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> (Thagaste)	<i>lib. arb.</i> (388)	<i>lib. arb.</i> (394/395)
	<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> (388)	
WRITINGS COMPLETED BY RETURN TO NORTH AFRICA		
<i>imm. an.</i>	(entire)	
<i>mor. ecc.</i>	(1.2-12.21, 15.25, 19.35-30.64) ³⁵	
<i>quant.</i>	(entire)	
<i>lib. arb.</i>	(at least bk. 1, but possibly up to 2.16.43) ³⁶	

²⁵ *retr.* 1.5.1-1.9.1.

²⁶ see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (1978), 66-76 and 93-98 (esp. 93-94), who provides an excellent discussion of this fact and of the chronology of *mor. ecc.* in particular.

²⁷ the perfect form of *cognoso* in *Romae etiam plura cognoui* (CSEL 90. 74) can either be taken as 'I know of several' or 'I got to know several'; but, in my opinion, the context of the passage supports the true past sense.

²⁸ *et ego quidem postea Romae cum essem.* CSEL 90. 134.

²⁹ *mor. Man.* (12.26) even speaks of recently having been at Carthage; cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 67.

³⁰ 'if we accept', as Coyle does (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 69, cf. 74), 'Bardy's theory that the *Retractationes* tend to list works chronologically, not according to when they were completed but according to when they were begun'; see also, Appendix A, p. 273 n. 27.

³¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 75.

³² see also Appendix A, for more details and for a list (Table 6) of all the works written up to 391.

³³ see *retr.* 1.5.1-1.9.7.

³⁴ cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 76.

³⁵ cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 94-98. See my comments below, esp. p. 70-72 and Appendix A, p. 271f.

³⁶ see ch. 4, Table 4; E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 11. O. Du Roy includes 2.16.44 as well in his assessment (*L'intelligence de la foi en la trinité selon saint Augustin* (1966),

This chapter will confirm the great importance of *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* for understanding the emergence of Augustine's early ecclesiology. At the same time, however, the textual issues which surround this work make it one of the most difficult to fit neatly into a chronological progression.³⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to consider some of these issues before proceeding.

J.K. Coyle's excellent study and commentary (*Augustine's De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (1974)) on the content, composition, and sources of *On the Morals* has set the agenda for subsequent scholars dealing with this important work. In summarizing the general content, Coyle says that in *On the Morals* 'Augustine is ... concerned with exposing the groundwork for Christian morality, with showing the beliefs of true Christians concerning the way they must behave, and with showing how those beliefs are put into practice'.³⁸ Augustine himself stated in the *Review* that his motivation for writing this work, together with *On Manichaean Morals*, was to combat Manichaean claims of superior abstinence and continence to that practiced by Catholic Christians.³⁹ In his section on the 'Date and place of writing' (p. 66-76) Coyle raises the issue of whether '*mor. I* and *mor. II* belong together'.⁴⁰ He writes, 'Might not the two have been written separately – at different times if not in different places – and been afterwards put together for the sake of convenience? In a sense, that is precisely what

236-239), but he is critiqued by Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 69 n. 290) for basing 'this conclusion on Augustine's terminology – a difficult criterion, since it is practically impossible to know to what extent Augustine amended the sections done in Rome prior to final publication'. Following a strict interpretation of the *retr.*, O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 146, and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 74, assign only book one to this period. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 31, writes on the dating of *lib. arb.* that it was 'begun at Rome in 387/8, finished at Hippo between 391 and 395/7—though much of the work was doubtless written c. 391, the process of revision and completion remains opaque to us, so that it is not certain that *anything* in *lib. arb.* can be assigned confidently to the earlier period'.

³⁷ as noted in the Introduction, p. xxviii-xxix, sufficient certainty in the chronology of Augustine works up to 391 exists to establish fairly precise stages of progress from them. However, it must be reiterated that the precise positioning of many of the developments I have identified is dependent to some extent on dates which can only be approximate. The developments themselves, it is felt, remain valid since they generally stretch beyond one work and, in general, the works can be fixed relative to each other with much greater exactitude than to particular dates for their inception, composition, completion, and 'publishing'.

³⁸ see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 80; see p. 80-83, for a brief but complete survey of the content of *mor. ecc.* (see also 260-262 for brief summary statements).

³⁹ *retr.* 1.7.1: 'Now, having been baptized, while I was at Rome, being unable to endure silently the boasting of the Manichaeans about [their] false and deceptive continence or abstinence, by which, in order to deceive the unlearned, they consider themselves superior to true Christians with whom they are not to be compared, I wrote two books: one *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, and the other *On the Morals of the Manichaeans*' (*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manicheorum libri duos. Iam baptizatus autem cum Romae essem, nec tacitus ferre possem Manicheorum iactantiam de falsa et fallaci continentia uel abstinencia, qua se ad imperitos decipiendos ueris christianis, quibus comparandi non sunt, insuper praeferunt, scripsi duos libros, unum de moribus ecclesiae catholicae et alterum de moribus Manicheorum.* CCL 57. 18).

⁴⁰ as Coyle refers to *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* and *De moribus Manichaeorum*.

happened'.⁴¹ Coyle goes on to note Augustine's unique treatment of these two books (giving each its own title) and his reference to *On Manichaean Morals* in *On the Morals* (34.75 *ad fin.*) as 'a separate volume' (*alio uolumine ostendere institui*, CSEL 90. 81), explaining that 'only later does it [*mor. Man.*] come to be looked on by Augustine as the second of "duo libri"'.⁴² He considers Augustine's lack of distinction in the *Review*⁴³ (where they appear together) as an indication not that the two works were written together (*i.e.* in the same time, consecutively, and place) but that they were 'published together'.⁴⁴ This indication, combined with Augustine's curious reference in the beginning of *On the Morals* to 'other books' in which he had refuted Manichee attacks on the Old Testament – books which Coyle, in agreement with most other scholars, identifies as *De Genesi aduersus Manicheos libri duo* – implies that Augustine 'must have completed (or at least retouched) "De moribus" at Thagaste'.⁴⁵ Coyle explains,

Soon after arriving at Thagaste, [Augustine] begins ... *mor. II* ... Since *mor. I* has not yet been published, he decides to put the two together, because of their similarity in title. But each book retains its own title, since the two have been written at different times for different purposes.⁴⁶

From all this, Coyle conjectures that the opening paragraph (1.1) of *On the Morals* was added in Africa, and that

since *mor. I*'s last five chapters concern the *practice* of Christian asceticism, about which nothing is said in the beginning of the work, where Augustine's stated purpose is to discuss Christian *teaching* on the moral life; and since these five chapters give special attention to community ... life among Christians: in them we possibly have an addition to a work originally intended to stop with the eulogy of the Church that ends at [*i.e.* not including] Chapter XXXI.⁴⁷

Although Augustine's comment in the *Review* implies that some work on '*mor. II*' was done at Rome and, despite the fact that some of the progressions Coyle identifies and assigns to North Africa could simply reflect developments in the intention or scope for the work at Rome, most of the observations in his discussion are highly plausible.⁴⁸ His arguments are admittedly provisional and do not seem to have much effect on the observations of ecclesiologically significant developments in 387-388, notably at

⁴¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 68.

⁴² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 68.

⁴³ see n. 39 above.

⁴⁴ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 68 *ad fin.*

⁴⁵ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 70.

⁴⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 94.

⁴⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 70-71.

⁴⁸ see Appendix A, p. 272-277, for further comment on Coyle's argumentation. J.J. O'Donnell's recent opinion is that *mor. ecc.* 31.65-68, 'Augustine's earliest discussion of monasticism', was 'Probably written in Italy in 388, it presents a view he acquired after the conversation reported here [*i.e.* the relations of Ponticianus in *conf.* 8.6.15]' (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 39, *cf.* 115).

Rome.⁴⁹ Still, in order to be as conservative as possible in terms of how early a particular development in Augustine’s understanding of the church occurred, Coyle’s division of *On the Morals* into Roman and North African parts will be maintained.⁵⁰

In any case, Augustine’s references in the writings of 387/388 to the church explicitly, to scripture, and to Christian teachings and beliefs, in addition to his conceptions and pursuits of the religious life, all illustrate that his understanding of the church was growing significantly. His first use of the term *ecclesia* in the writings of 387 and 388 (found in both *mor. ecc.* 10.16 and *quant.* 33.76) has already been mentioned.⁵¹ This term became important to Augustine’s Christian thought and arguments in this period. But the emergence of ecclesial ideas in 387-388 is not limited to this term. Tables 3 of selected terms (below) reinforces the extent to which the writings of Rome betray new ecclesial elements, interest, and familiarity in his writings after leaving Milan. The frequency of a number of significant ecclesiological and other Christian terms in Augustine’s treatises from 386 to 391, providing some interesting contrasts and progressions, can be seen in Appendix B.

Table 3. The frequency of some of Augustine’s ecclesial terms in 386-391⁵²

Works/Dates	<i>eccles</i> *	<i>bapti</i> *	<i>catholic</i> *	<i>sacrament</i> *	<i>catechum</i> *	<i>episcop</i> *, <i>presb</i> *, <i>deacon</i> *
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386						
<i>beata u.</i> 386						
<i>ord.</i> Dec. 386						
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>imm. an.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>quant.</i> 388	3		1			

⁴⁹ one exception to this statement is Coyle’s point about Augustine’s ecclesiastical orientation toward asceticism as a motivating factor (for the last five chapters) only after the return to Africa. This idea is critiqued in Appendix A, p. 274f. If the section at the end of our copy of *mor. ecc.* that contains references to specific ascetic individuals/communities does date from Rome, or if it was drafted in part at Rome (both of which are possibilities), then the ecclesial aspects drawn out for the period considered in this chapter would be even stronger (cf. below esp. p. 116f.). This section of *mor. ecc.* is addressed in greater detail in ch. 4, esp. p. 145f.

⁵⁰ i.e. Coyle’s Roman draft: 1.2-12.21; 15.25; 19.35-30.64; and the North African additions: 1.1; 13.22-14.24; 15.26-18.34; 31.65-35.80.

⁵¹ see ch. 2, p. 44 (esp. n. 116).

⁵² using the CETEDOC CD-ROM’s *Library of Christian Latin Texts* (1991). See Appendix B for search form explanations. I am aware that there are many factors which may partly relativize these results (such as subject matter – e.g. it is not so surprising that most of these terms are not found in *lib. arb.*). Still complete absences of the most ecclesiastical of the terms in the works leading up to Rome (and esp. prior to *mor. ecc.*) are surely significant. Appendix B provides further discussion of these and other results.

Works/Dates	<i>eccles</i> *	<i>bapti</i> *	<i>catholic</i> *	<i>sacrament</i> *	<i>catechum</i> *	<i>episcop</i> *, <i>presb</i> *, <i>deacon</i> *
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	11	1	16	3	2	2, 3, 1
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388						
<i>mor. Man.</i> 387-389	4		8			4, 2
<i>diu. qu.</i> ⁵³ 388-391				1 (36,43)		
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-390	12	3	6	5		
<i>mag.</i> 388-391						
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	1 (bk. 6)		1 (bk. 6)	1 (bk. 6)		
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/391	13	1	15	11		

FIRST IDEAS OF THE CHURCH: TEACHER, MOTHER, CATHOLIC

In the works of 387/388, both a quantitative and qualitative emphasis on ecclesiological aspects and ideas are encountered. Considering that Augustine had just recently been exposed to concentrated Christian doctrine in Milan, it is no surprise that, as was the case at Cassiciacum in the *Dialogues*, he expressed many distinctively Christian beliefs and concepts in his writings in the period of his journey back to North Africa. He specifically mentions: the Trinity;⁵⁴ one God – the creator of all⁵⁵ and only proper object of worship;⁵⁶ the incarnation and the full deity of Christ;⁵⁷ the virgin birth (these

⁵³ this includes only questions 1-50, which may have been written by early 391. See ch. 4 n. 38, for details on the chronology of *diu. qu.* The number given in '()' for *diu. qu.* are the 'question' numbers where the term appears.

⁵⁴ while there is an extensive discussion of the Trinity, mentioning it explicitly, in the present form of *mor. ecc.*, in sections 13.22-14.24 and 16.26-17.32, J.K. Coyle's critical study, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), questions whether these sections were written at Rome and suggests that they were inserted later at Thagaste. As stated above, I have accepted most of his conclusions, provisionally, in the body of the thesis, while holding some reservations (discussed in Appendix A). However, despite the lack of a direct reference to 'Trinity' in the 'Roman version' of *mor. ecc.*, it should be remembered that Augustine had referred to the Trinity explicitly as early as 386 (*ord.* 2.5.16 and *beata. u.* 4.35) and, as Coyle himself indicates (241, cf. 245f.), that Augustine does have 'implicit trinitarian formulae elsewhere'. See also the comments on these 'excursi' in light of the period of Augustine's baptism in Milan, below p. 110-111.

⁵⁵ *lib. arb.* 1.2.4, 5 (where God is described as 'omnipotent and immutable'; *omnipotentem atque ex nulla particula commutabilem.* CCL 29. 213); *quant.* 33.76-34.77; *mor. ecc.* 10.16; 11.19-12.21.

⁵⁶ *quant.* 36.80.

⁵⁷ *quant.* 33.76; *mor. ecc.* 7.11 and *lib. arb.* 1.2.5 (described as equal to the Father); 2.15.39 respectively; cf. *mor. ecc.* 2.3; 11.18; 12.21.

last two are called 'miracles of that historical account');⁵⁸ bodily resurrection;⁵⁹ the authority and divine origin of scripture;⁶⁰ and the Catholic church.⁶¹ That the Christian God exists is taken as a given by Augustine in this period.⁶²

A significant difference, however, exists between these statements and those found in the Cassiciacum writings.⁶³ In the *Dialogues*, Augustine's Christian ideas seemed to have come almost solely from scripture (mostly through his own reading and contemplation, with hints of the exposure he had through Ambrose).⁶⁴ Now his Christian ideas are described as the teachings of the Catholic church (e.g. *quant.* 34.77)⁶⁵ as well as being from scripture.⁶⁶ Augustine refers to the teaching which he had received from the church in a number of places. For example, he prefers to use 'the (very) words by which these things have been introduced to me' (*quant.* 34.77)⁶⁷ when discussing the 'divine and matchless' teaching of the church on God's pre-eminence as the only right object of the soul's devotion. Another example occurs in his reference to the 'many writings of the church' in his comments on the subject of the love of God as 'true religion' (*quant.* 34.78).⁶⁸ Toward the beginning of *On the Morals* (3.4-6.10), Augustine addressed the issue of happiness and posited that one is only truly happy when one possesses what is best. After evaluating several options of what is 'best' he concluded that 'only God remains'.⁶⁹ 'Whom, if we follow after him, we live well; if we understand (reach) him, we live not only well but also happily' (*mor. ecc.* 6.10).⁷⁰ With these new beliefs, however, came new questions for Augustine:

⁵⁸ *quant.* 33.76: *huius historiae miracula*. CSEL 89. 225; cf. *lib. arb.* 2.2.5.

⁵⁹ *quant.* 33.76.

⁶⁰ *mor. ecc.* 7.11; 26.49-50; 29.60; *quant.* 28.55.

⁶¹ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 10.16; 30.62 and *quant.* 34.77. 'Catholic' is used here both in a titular sense, i.e. Catholic as opposed to heretics (esp. Manichees), and in its primary sense of universal.

⁶² e.g. *mor. ecc.* 6.10 and *lib. arb.* 2.25.

⁶³ see ch. 1, p. 11f., for a list of the distinctively Christian elements mentioned in the *Dialogues*.

⁶⁴ 'sermons' (or 'words', *sermones*; *beata. u.* 1.4, CCL 29. 67) and 'writings' (*scriptis*, *sol.* 2.14.26, CSEL 89. 80).

⁶⁵ see n. 67 for Latin; cf. also *quant.* 34.78: *multas ecclesiae scripturas*. CSEL 89. 228.

⁶⁶ *quant.* 28.55; *mor. ecc.* 7.11; 30.64; and *lib. arb.* 2.15.39; in addition to the intentional and manifold use of scripture and arguments for its veracity and authority throughout *mor. ecc.* (see esp. the intentions for writing given in 1.1 and 1.2 and Appendix C on scripture usage in 387-388).

⁶⁷ *Ideoque diuine ac singulariter in ecclesia catholica traditur nullam creaturam colendam esse animae – libentius enim loquor his uerbis, quibus mihi haec insinuata sunt*. CSEL 89. 225. This is clearly a reference to the teaching received as part of Augustine's baptismal instruction at Milan. The referent of this statement in *quant.* is: '*nullam creaturam colendam esse animae*' (cf. *PL* 32. 1077), however, I have not been able to identify the exact context of instruction from which this statement derives.

⁶⁸ *per tam multas ecclesiae scripturas dispersa*. CSEL 89. 228, and *Haec est uera, haec perfecta, haec sola religio*. CSEL 89. 227, respectively; cf. below, p. 112f. for further discussion on how the church is brought into Augustine's new pursuit of true religion.

⁶⁹ *mor. ecc.* 8.13; 30.62.

⁷⁰ *Deus igitur restat quem si sequimur, bene, si assequimur, non tantum bene sed etiam beate uiuimus*. CSEL 90. 13.

How are we to follow after one whom we do not see? Or in what way can we see him, we who are not only human, but also people lacking wisdom? For although he is perceived not with bodily eyes but with the mind, what fit mind can be found which, while enveloped in a cloud of foolishness, will be able to take in or even attempt to take in that light? (*mor. ecc.* 7.11)⁷¹

In addressing this question, Augustine wrote, 'one must turn to the precepts (instruction) of those who may be believed to be wise' (*mor. ecc.* 7.11).⁷² This suggestion flowed from his belief that reason can only take one so far in the contemplation of the divine.

Reason has been able to lead this far. For in human things it is employed not so much in certainty of truth but more in sureness of utility. But when it comes to divine things, it averts itself [its gaze]. ... therefore [when we] retreat into the darkness with cupidity, through the dispensation of ineffable wisdom we are met by the (comforting) shade of authority and with the wonderful deeds and words of its books, which like signs and shade make tolerable the [heat of] truth (*mor. ecc.* 7.11).⁷³

Yet, the communication of authority does not stand alone in *On the Morals* since it is the 'holy and most learned men of the Catholic church' who 'explain the scriptures to those who are interested and discerning' (*mor. ecc.* 10.16).⁷⁴ The implication is that it is the church which provides the necessary authority by which people come to see God.

In addition to the necessity of the church's teaching, Augustine also spoke of its excellence.⁷⁵ The instructions handed over by the Catholic church are considered 'divinely' inspired and 'matchless' (*diuine ac singulariter, quant.* 34.77).⁷⁶ He described the teachers of the church as 'devout and learned' (*mor. ecc.* 28.56)⁷⁷ and wise.⁷⁸ In *On the Morals* 10.16, he stated that the arguments of the Manichaeans cannot compare to the discourses of the 'holy and most learned men of the Catholic church'.⁷⁹ In Augustine's view, one who buys into the arguments of the Manichaeans does 'no discredit to the teaching of the church, but merely displays their ignorance of

⁷¹ *Sed quo pacto sequimur quem non uidemus, aut quomodo uidemus, qui non solum homines sed etiam insipientes homines sumus? Quamquam enim non oculis sed mente cernatur, quae tandem mens idonea reperiri potest, quae cum stultitiae nube obtegatur, ualeat illam lucem uel etiam conetur haurire?* CSEL 90. 13.

⁷² *Confugiendum est igitur ad eorum praecepta, quos sapientes fuisse probabile est.* CSEL 90. 13.

⁷³ *Hactenus potuit ratio perducere. Uersabatur namque non ueritate certior sed consuetudine securior in rebus humanis. At ubi ad diuina peruentum est, aduertit sese; intueri non potest, palpitat, aestuat, inhiat amore, reuerberatur luce ueritatis et ad familiaritatem tenebrarum suarum non electione sed fatigue conuertitur. ... Ergo refugere in tenebrosa cupientibus per dispensationem ineffabilis sapientiae nobis illa opacitas auctoritatis occurrat et mirabilibus rerum uocibusque librorum uelut signis temperatioribus ueritatis umbrisque blandiatur.* CSEL 90. 13-14.

⁷⁴ *piorum doctissimorumque hominum sermonibus, per quos in ecclesia catholica scripturae illae uolentibus dignisque aperiuntur, comparari queunt.* CSEL 90. 19; cf. *mor. ecc.* 28.56.

⁷⁵ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 1.2; 28.55, 56; 30.63.

⁷⁶ see n. 67 for Latin in full.

⁷⁷ *multi religiosi doctique.* CSEL 90. 59; cf. *mor. ecc.* 10.16 and 18.34, among other examples.

⁷⁸ *mor. ecc.* 7.11.

⁷⁹ see n. 74 for Latin.

it'.⁸⁰ This is one of several sections in *On the Morals* and *The Greatness of the Soul* which show that in Augustine's Roman writings the truth of scripture and the teaching of the church are viewed as completely congruent.⁸¹ Augustine considered that the goal towards which both Christian teaching and scripture enable/direct is spiritual, namely, the comprehension of God. In discussing 'disciplina' (by which the health of the mind is restored),⁸² teaching is described as that which 'aids the soul with discipline' (*mor. ecc.* 28.55).⁸³ The Roman portion of *On the Morals* concludes with a eulogy to the church (*mor. ecc.* 30.62-64), praising its work, nature, and teaching. Clearly, one of the first things which Augustine associated in his mind with the 'church' was teaching. For Augustine, the teaching of the church communicates authority, equips the soul, explains scriptures, and brings people to God.

In what Coyle considers the final section of the Roman draft of *On the Morals* (30.62-64), Augustine praised the 'Catholic church, most true mother of Christians' specifically with respect to the reason and content of her proclamation.⁸⁴ Her teaching is rightly directed towards the 'life of greatest happiness' (*uita beatissima*) in pure and chaste devotion to the incorporeal, inviolable God. It is a source of medicine for the many 'souls sick on account of their sin' (*mor. ecc.* 30.62)⁸⁵ and correctly interprets the scriptures, thus allowing the 'divine character of these words' to accomplish 'sanctification' (*mor. ecc.* 30.64).⁸⁶ Finally, in this passage, Augustine noted that the

⁸⁰ *Qua quisquis mouetur et ad uos transit, non ecclesiae nostrae damnat disciplinam, sed eam se ignorare demonstrat.* CSEL 90. 20.

⁸¹ elsewhere, *mor. ecc.* 8.13 speaks of 'the manner [in which] the gospel commands us to live' and of 'the ultimate good which Christ proscribes for us' as coming under the rubric of the first commandment (Mt. 22.37) and 'the end of perfect love' (see also *mor. ecc.* 9.14, cf. Deut. 6.5), the same underlying motive communicated by the church's teaching (cf. CSEL 90. 15: *Uideamus, quemadmodum ipse dominus in euangelio nobis praeceperit esse uiuendum, ... Audiamus ergo quem finem bonorum nobis, Christe, praescribas; nec dubium est quin is erit finis, quo nos summo amore tendere iubes*).

⁸² *mor. ecc.* 28.55. In each of the references to 'teaching' above, either 'disciplina' is used (e.g. in each of the references in n. 75) or 'teaching' is implied (e.g. see n. 74). See Appendix B, Table 11 and p. 300-302, for discussion of Augustine considerable use of 'disciplina' and minimal use of 'doctrina' in this period generally.

⁸³ *Cum enim haec facimus, ope corpori, cum autem docemus ut fiant, disciplina animo subuenimus.* CSEL 90. 58. The later continuation of this passage: '*... quae medicina nisi diuinitus populis mitteretur nulla spes salutis esset tam immoderata progressionem peccantium*' (CSEL 90. 58), implies a connection between *disciplina* and the healing salvation of Christ.

⁸⁴ *Merito ecclesia catholica, mater Christianorum uerissima, non solum ipsum cuius adeptio uita beatissima est, purissime atque castissime colendum praedicat.* CSEL 90. 65. J.K. Coyle has highlighted the theme of the 'communauté ecclésiale' in *mor. ecc.* from this passage, see 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae: Augustin Chrétien à Rome', J.K. Coyle, et al., «De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum» «De quantitate animae» di AGOSTINO D'IPPONA (1991), 44-46.

⁸⁵ *et ab illa incorrupta et inuolabili aeternitate, cui soli homo subiciendus est, cui soli rationalis anima cohaerendo non misera est, ... ut uariarum morborum, quibus pro peccatis suis animae aegrotant, omnis apud te medicina praepolleat.* CSEL 90. 65-66.

⁸⁶ *ut exustis omnibus uitiiis et homine purgato atque sanctificato satis appareat quam diuine dictum sit.* CSEL 90. 67.

church establishes proper principles of social relation: 'while preserving the ties of nature and choice, you unite all those related by blood or marriage with a bond of mutual love' (*mor. ecc.* 30.63).⁸⁷ The church joins 'citizen to citizen, ... and all people ... not just in society, but in a kind of fraternity' (*mor. ecc.* 30.63);⁸⁸ it unites all the 'many who love God' (*mor. ecc.* 30.64).⁸⁹

The idea of the church as teacher and as a place of teaching (*i.e.* where devout and spiritual teachers and learners are found) is also the one which seems to have dominated Augustine's consideration of his relationship to the church. This is partially because of his educational interests at the time. Augustine was bent on gaining 'the blessing of discovery which does not cease for religious souls who strive piously, chastely, and diligently to know themselves and their God – that is, the truth' (*quant.* 14.24).⁹⁰ The same goal was articulated in 386 in *Against the Academics*⁹¹ but it is now more refined. At Cassiciacum, Augustine had the intention and made preliminary steps in the attempt to see and know God. Now, he has settled more clearly on not only the course but also the program of life which will bring him to understanding. Augustine believed that religion, piety, chastity, and perseverance were all parts of the spiritual life that leads to knowledge of self (*i.e.* the soul) and God.⁹² By 387-388, Augustine felt that this program and these pursuits were in accordance with the church's teaching and ought to occur in the framework of the universal church.⁹³

⁸⁷ *Tu pueriliter pueros, fortiter iuvenes, quiete senes, prout cuiusque non corporis tantum sed animi aetas est, exerces et doces ... Tu omnem generis propinquitatem et affinitatis necessitudinem, seruatis naturae uoluntatisque nexibus, mutua caritate constringis.* CSEL 90. 66.

⁸⁸ *Tu ciues ciuibus, gentes gentibus et prorsus hominibus homines primorum parentum recordatione, non societate tantum sed quadam etiam fraternitate coniungis.* CSEL 90. 66-67.

⁸⁹ *Quae duae uoces unius dei in duobus testamentis signatae sanctificationem animae concordia attestazione declarant, ... Merito tibi tam multi hospitales, multi misericordes, multi officiosi, multi docti, multi casti, multi sancti, multi usque adeo dei amore flagrant.* CSEL 90. 68-69.

⁹⁰ *Fieri autem non potest quadam diuina prouidentia, ut religiosi animis seipsos et deum suum, id est ueritatem, pie, caste ac diligenter quaerentibus, inueniendi facultas desit.* CSEL 89. 161.

⁹¹ *i.e. Acad.* 3.20.43; see ch. 1, p. 4-5.

⁹² cf. *mor. ecc.* 11.19 and 15.25, where virtue is equated with the perfect love of God and the practice of the four virtues are described as different manifestations of love: 'temperance is love offering itself completely to that which is loved, fortitude is love enduring all things willingly for the sake of that which is loved, justice is love serving only what is loved and therefore ruling rightly, and prudence is love choosing those things which help it as opposed to those which hinder it' (*mor. ecc.* 15.25: *ut temperantia sit amor integrum se praebens ei quod amatur, fortitudo amor facile tolerans omnia propter quod amatur, iustitia amor soli amato seruiens et propterea recte dominans, prudentia amor ea quibus adiuuatur ab eis quibus impeditur sagaciter seligens.* CSEL 90. 29-30). cf. also Ambrose, *Iacob* 1.3.9, where he speaks of Christ's teaching to the disciples in terms of the virtues.

⁹³ e.g. in *quant.* 33.70-76, Augustine discussed the seven levels of the greatness of (or the ascent of) the soul. The fourth level (see *quant.* 33.73) deals with the way in which the soul 'withdraws from sordid things [of the physical world] and cleanses itself thoroughly and renders itself most pure' (*sese abstrahere a sordibus totamque emaculare ac mundissimam reddere.* CSEL 89. 221). The discussion is very neo-Platonic until Augustine inserts the necessary stage of submission to the 'authority and direction of wise men', trusting that 'through them God is speaking to itself' (*roborare se aduersus omnia, quae de proposito ac sententia demouere moliuntur, societatem humanam magni pendere nihilque uelle alteri, quod sibi nolit accidere, sequi auctoritatem ac praecepta sapientium et per haec*

Furthermore, the conception of the church as teacher included an admirable example for Augustine – namely, the ‘excellent and rare offices of teacher’ (*mor. ecc.* 28.55).⁹⁴ Augustine did not anywhere identify himself with such an office,⁹⁵ but the connection between such a role and Augustine’s personal goals and interests can be seen in the following quote from *The Greatness of the Soul*:

if we hold most constantly [to] the course which God enjoins on us and which we have undertaken to keep, we will eventually come by God’s power and wisdom to that highest cause, or highest author, or highest principle of all things ... [and] when we have understood this, we will see truly ... Then we will perceive how true are those things which we have been commanded to believe, and how perfect has been *our nourishment within [our] mother church ... To accept such nourishment when fed by one’s mother is most proper; when already grown, shameful; to refuse it when needed would be bad; to find fault with it at any time or to disdain it would be wicked and impious; but to discuss it and communicate it with kindness is the mark of an overflow of goodness and charity* (italics mine, *quant.* 33.76).⁹⁶

In this very important selection, it seems clear that Augustine felt he had committed himself to a particular program of life by his conversion and baptism – a life which

loqui sibi deum credere. CSEL 89. 221). The soul can succeed in the ‘difficult work of self-cleansing’ but only if it ‘commits itself most dutifully and prudently for help and achievement’ to the ‘goodness of the supreme and true God’ (*Tanta est tamen anima, ut etiam hoc possit adiuuante sane iustitia summi et ueri dei, qua haec uniuersitas sustentatur et regitur; qua etiam factum est, ut non modo sint omnia, sed ita sint, ut omnino melius esse non possint. Cui sese in opere tam difficili mundationis suae adiuuandam et perficiendam piissime tutissimeque committit.* CSEL 89. 222). Augustine went on to speak of how the soul, having been cleansed, can now ‘with incredible confidence advance towards God, i.e. to the contemplation of truth; and by this attain that highest and most hidden reward for which it had labored so hard’ (*quant.* 33.74: *Quod cum effectum erit, id est, cum fuerit anima ab omni tabe libera maculisque diluta ... tunc uero ingenti quadam et incredibili fiducia pergit in deum, id est in ipsam contemplationem ueritatis, et illud, propter quod tantum laboratum est, altissimum et secretissimum praemium.* CSEL 89. 222). This activity, in turn, is described in the next section as ‘the soul’s highest vision; than which it possesses none more perfect, noble, or proper’; but again it is made clear that the soul’s vision of God is not possible unless one’s ‘heart is first made clean’ (*quant.* 33.75: *Sed haec actio, id est adpetitio intellegendi ea, quae uere summeque sunt, summus aspectus est animae, quo perfectiorem, meliorem rectioremque non habet. ... Qui profecto in ea non instauratur, nisi prius cor mundum fuerit, hoc est, nisi prius ipsa cogitatio ab omni cupiditate ac faece rerum mortalium sese cohibuerit et eliquauerit.* CSEL 89. 222-223).

⁹⁴ *sic in animo sunt quaedam, in quibus excellentia illa et rara magisteria non admodum desiderantur.* CSEL 90. 58; a role which he also understood God to take: ‘And he who is over us, the teacher of all, will not fail us who seek after him’ (*quant.* 36.81: *Neque enim deerit nobis quaerentibus se, qui desuper magister est omnium.* CSEL 89. 231); cf. *ep.* 29.9 and *mor. ecc.* 29.59. The use of the plural (*magisteria*) here is rare. The term can communicate ideas such as superintendent, instructor, tutorship, teacher, master, or governance, instruction, or teaching; but the idea of position or office is almost always implied. It is not clear exactly how Augustine viewed such ‘office’; e.g. it does not appear that he aspired toward a recognized position. Yet, clearly his writing for the benefit of the church indicates a willingness to be identified as a Catholic teacher though not a ‘teacher of the church’.

⁹⁵ indeed, who exactly these teachers were, is one line raised for future research.

⁹⁶ *Illud plane nunc ego audeo tibi dicere, nos si cursum, quem nobis deus imperat et quem tenendum suscepimus, constantissime tenuerimus, peruenturos per uirtutem dei atque sapientiam ad summam illam causam uel summum auctorem uel summum principium rerum omnium uel si quo alio modo res tanta congruentius adpellari potest; quo intellecto uere uidebimus, ... Tunc agnoscemus, quam uera nobis credenda imperata sint quamque optime ac saluberrime apud matrem ecclesiam nutriti fuerimus quaeue sit utilitas lactis illius, quod apostolus Paulus paruulis se potum dedisse praedicauit; quod alimentum accipere, cum quis matre nutritur, saluberrimum, cum iam grandis est, pudendum, respuere, cum opus est, miserandum, reprehendere aliquando aut odisse sceleris et impietatis, tractare autem ac dispensare commode laudis et caritatis plenissimum est.* CSEL 89. 223-224.

strove after God and, with the help of divine 'power and wisdom',⁹⁷ led to God, the ground of all things. The point of achieving this goal by *ratio*, or the *intellectus*, is not to gain new knowledge but to understand the knowledge which had already been made clear by the instruction (nourishment) and statements of belief of the Catholic church – to which Augustine had been exposed, increasingly, during his time in Milan.⁹⁸ This understanding in turn was to be communicated; the child of the church grew to take a part in its instruction. Thus, in this quote the church is integral to 'the course which God enjoins' upon the people who would know him as the source of right knowledge and perfect nourishment. The church begets the Christian by articulating what one needed to believe and to do in order to enter spiritual life and by acting as the door into God's spiritual community. The church was the mother⁹⁹ who gave birth to and first nourished all Christians until they were grown,¹⁰⁰ that is, until they were able to pursue understanding on their own and, beyond that, to communicate it to others. Augustine had recognized his 'need' to overcome his impure flesh in order to be able to know God¹⁰¹ and had not 'refused' but had 'received the nourishment' of the mother church – the authority bestowed through the Christian mysteries, rites and scriptures.¹⁰² Now as one 'growing' (as he understood himself), Augustine could not be complacent or content simply to know the truth and yet not understand it. On the contrary, he wrote 'now we are attempting to know *with understanding* and to grasp

⁹⁷ both of these terms are links to Christ. It was common for Augustine to refer to Christ as wisdom (e.g. *mor. ecc.* 16.28, 17.31, and 29.59), having used such terms to describe the Son of God since his earliest Christian days at Cassiciacum (e.g. *Acad.* 2.1.1; cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 341-342 and 401).

⁹⁸ culminating in his baptismal instruction and the instruction he received as a neophyte, see below, p. 87f., 93f., and 100f., for further discussion of that instruction. Augustine's greatest personal desire remained that of gaining understanding and experience of the world of spiritual reality which his mind was now able to grasp having received the knowledge of the mysteries of the church and having been cleansed by Christ's work, which was applied to him in baptism.

⁹⁹ an image not just found in this passage from *quant.*; e.g. in *mor. ecc.* 10.17, Augustine referred to the 'whimpering babes' among the Christians whom the 'breasts of the Catholic church sustain' (*Ita fit ut apud nos inueniantur pueri quidam, qui humana forma deum cogitent atque ita se habere suspicentur, ... quos quasi uagientes catholicae ubera sustentant.* CSEL 90. 20-21); cf. p. 77. These 'babes' are contrasted in the passage to the *multi senes* who understand that God exists not only beyond body but even beyond mind.

¹⁰⁰ for some this might take longer or might not be a possibility in earthly life (cf. *ord.* 2.9.26).

¹⁰¹ cf. *Acad.* 3.19.42; 3.20.43; cf. *conf.* 7.17.23-7.18.24.

¹⁰² in speaking of 'institutions' of the church I am referring to the organized structures (e.g. clergy, liturgy, buildings, congregations, rites, etc.) which acted as the primary repository/guardians of Christian authority. Discussing baptism in connection with the 'mother church', M.L. Dutton notes, 'The fourth-century Church understood the font itself as the mother of the newly christened, who were born from it as from the womb of the Church' ('"When I Was a Child": Spiritual Infancy and God's Maternity in Augustine's *Confessiones*', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 126, citing W.M. Bedard, *The Symbolism of the Baptismal Font in Early Christian Thought* (1971)). The direct connection between Augustine's baptism and his subsequent use of '*mater ecclesia*' should not be ignored (see discussions below).

firmly what we have received on faith' (italics mine, *lib. arb.* 1.3.6).¹⁰³ Here the famous construct of 'faith seeking understanding' is evidenced.¹⁰⁴ In *On the Morals*, Augustine told of those in the Catholic church who did not seem to be able to grow past spiritual infancy.¹⁰⁵ Such individuals ought to remain highly dependent on the institutional church. Indeed, it appears that Augustine saw this as a large part of the remit of these institutions.¹⁰⁶

Yet, is not Augustine's intention of finding understanding on the foundation of Christian authority through neo-Platonic philosophy simply a continuation of what was observed at Cassiciacum? In 386 he had written,

I have fixed in my mind to depart on absolutely no occasion from the authority of Christ; for I perceive none stronger. But concerning that which has to be sought by the most subtle reasoning – for I have this on my mind, since I am impatient in my desire to grasp truth not only by belief but also by understanding. I am confident, meanwhile, that I will find this understanding with the Platonists, and it will not be opposed to our sacred mysteries (*Acad.* 3.20.43).¹⁰⁷

Augustine's intention to grasp in understanding what he had received in faith is a refinement well in line with his earlier intention, but it nevertheless marks a significant step in his ecclesiological development, for the church is now understood as part of the process. What came out of Cassiciacum was a personal program, with the somewhat scattered elements of: neo-Platonic philosophy; community living and dialogue; training in the liberal arts; and individual pursuit of the religious life. These elements were pursued (a bit at random) in the attempt to reach Augustine's goals. Now, in 387–388, after initiation into the church at Milan, a more coherent framework can be observed in his program, or course of life. The church played the central role in providing this framework.¹⁰⁸ In the sermons on the creed and the baptismal rites (not to mention the many other 'regular' sermons a *competens* would have heard), what one received on faith in Christianity had been clearly spelled out.¹⁰⁹ The church had provided the parameters of knowledge¹¹⁰ and right belief for all. Specifically, it had

¹⁰³ *Sed nunc molimur id, quod in fidem recepimus, etiam intellegendo scire ac tenere firmissimum.* CCL 29. 214.

¹⁰⁴ based on the Septuagint (mis)reading of Isaiah 7.9, cf. *lib. arb.* 2.2.6.

¹⁰⁵ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 10.17, see n. 99 above.

¹⁰⁶ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14.

¹⁰⁷ *Mihi ergo certum est nusquam prorsus a Christi auctoritate discedere; non enim reperio ualentiores. Quod autem subtilissima ratione persequendum est – ita enim iam sum affectus, ut quid sit uerum non credendo solum sed etiam intellegendo apprehendere impatienter desiderem – apud Platonicos me interim, quod sacris nostris non repugnet, reperturum esse confido.* CCL 29. 61.

¹⁰⁸ e.g. *quant.* 33.76.

¹⁰⁹ cf. below, p. 87–110, for examples from Ambrose's expositions on the creed, the baptismal process, and Christian scripture generally.

¹¹⁰ though not of inquiry. Augustine would have been a believer during this time in the maxim 'all truth is God's truth'. If the physical world really was in large part a manifestation of a higher spiritual world then almost anything around Augustine could be profitably explored for its spiritual meaning.

communicated: God's own concise statements of truth which contained spiritual meaning (*i.e.* the Christian mysteries); spiritual cleansing; and finally, affiliation to the church. The church was God's construct (or 'work')¹¹¹ for human salvation,¹¹² protection, and spiritualization. Those who become 'grown',¹¹³ however, are also obligated by love to communicate the church's teaching 'in kindness' for this is a mark of 'goodness and charity' (*quant.* 33.76).¹¹⁴ Augustine was one of the privileged, able to grasp spiritual reality and it was thus incumbent on him to use that gift for the good of others as well as himself. In his mind, this primarily meant working on behalf of other Christians;¹¹⁵ enabling those who could achieve spiritual understanding to do so¹¹⁶ and contributing to the protection of those who could not. Yet, the strong persuasive element in Augustine's writings 'against' heretics, which begin during 387-388, indicated an element of charity towards those outside the church as well.¹¹⁷

These actions for others are especially significant in view of Augustine's conception (expressed at Cassiciacum and probably originally sparked beforehand by Plotinus)¹¹⁸ that there are some who are able to ascend to God by reason once they have been cleansed by God's authority, while others are not able to grasp spiritual reality and so must remain in fixed dependence on the authoritative truth they have received by faith. Augustine had acceded to his need for the purification of his flesh through Christ.¹¹⁹ Still, the strain of elitism remains in his writings, separating humanity into two groups – those who are able to reason and those who are dependent on the reason and teaching of others.¹²⁰ In 387/388, he wrote:

It is the case that among us certain children are found who picture God in human form and suppose him to actually have such a form. Nothing is more [abject] than this opinion. But there are also many mature ones who perceive that his majesty remains inviolable and unchangeable ... [as for those] who, like whimpering babies, the breasts of the Catholic [church] nurse; so that they will not be carried off by heretics, they are nourished according to the strength and capacity of each (*mor. ecc.* 10.17).¹²¹

At Thagaste (*cf. ep.* 11.2), Augustine would make a distinction between what things were most profitably pursued intellectually (see ch. 4, p. 155).

¹¹¹ *cf.* Ambrose's *expl. sym.* 6 and see below, p. 90-91 (esp. n. 179).

¹¹² *cf. conf.* 9.6.14.

¹¹³ *i.e.* spiritually mature; for Augustine, this attainment has to do not only with exposure to teaching but also with some inherent individual ability or education.

¹¹⁴ see n. 96 for Latin.

¹¹⁵ a development from the broadly focused writings from Cassiciacum or on the liberal arts.

¹¹⁶ *cf. mus.* 6.1.1 and *retr.* 1.5.3.

¹¹⁷ *cf. conf.* 9.4.8.

¹¹⁸ *e.g. Enneads* 1.5.6.

¹¹⁹ *cf. Acad.* 3.19.42-3.20.43; *cf. beata u.* 4.36 or *sol.* 2.6.12f.; *cf. also mor. ecc.* 7.11.

¹²⁰ for examples of this strain in the *Dialogues*, see *ord.* 2.9.26, 27 and 2.11.30; see ch. 1, esp. p. 22-24, for discussion and other references.

¹²¹ *Ita fit ut apud nos inueniantur pueri quidam, qui humana forma deum cogitent atque ita se habere suspicentur, qua opinione nihil est abiectius; sed inueniuntur item multi senes, qui eius maiestatem non solum super humanum corpus, sed etiam super ipsam mentem manere inuiolabilem atque*

Augustine certainly did not feel a need to be 'nursed' by the Catholic church. The implication is that he did not *need* the church at all, after sufficient authority, grace, and instruction (access to the 'mysteries') had been given upon which he could base his reasoning. Interestingly, however, the challenges that Augustine's twofold conception of humanity might have presented for his relating to the general Christian community (such as complete withdrawal) are now balanced by the obligations of love for them, and especially by the need for him as a sort of teacher.¹²²

Augustine undoubtedly considered himself to be involved in spiritual education in the early years following his conversion. His desire for Romanianus in *Against the Academics* was that his patron should 'see' and experience true philosophy (and the 'conflagration of the heart' which had accompanied Augustine's vision of the same).¹²³ The demonstrations in the *Dialogues* of the certainty of absolute truth (contra skepticism), of the order of the universe, and of the nature of true happiness, were designed to point toward the reality of the spiritual world (of Plato) and the ideal of seeking understanding of God and the soul. The goal in the *libri disciplinarum* was to lead those who could grasp the reality of the incorporeal to it by means of corporeal things (objects of study).¹²⁴

Yet, once again, marked developments are seen in the writings of 387-388. In *On the Morals* (10.17), Augustine spoke from the perspective of a teacher and protector of spiritually immature Catholics. He rebuffed the Manichaeans:

for we condemn, more vehemently and thoroughly [than you], any kind of faith in which anything unbefitting is attributed to God. And in those [in the church] by whom these [biblical] texts are literally understood, we correct their simplicity and we deride their stubbornness [in remaining simple]. And in many other ways which you are not able to understand, Catholic teaching (discipline) checks the belief of those who have advanced, not in years but in devotion and understanding, beyond childishness of mind into the 'age' of wisdom. For it is taught that it is foolish to believe that God is contained in any quantity of space in any place even if it be infinite; to think that God, or any part of him, is moved or passes from place to place is considered abominable.¹²⁵

incommutabilem eadem ipsa mente conspiciant. ... Itaque illi quos quasi uagientes catholicae ubera sustentant, si ab haereticis non fuerint depraedati, pro suo quisque captu uiribusque nutriuntur perducunturque alius sic, alius autem sic, primum in uirum perfectum, deinde ad maturitatem canitiemque sapientiae perueniunt, ut eis quantum uolunt, uiuere ac beatissime uiuere liceat. CSEL 90. 20-21.

¹²² of course his hierarchical view of humanity was just reinforced by this 'need'. See p. 107-109 for some possible encouragement in this direction from the sermons of Ambrose.

¹²³ *Acad.* 1.1.3.

¹²⁴ *retr.* 1.6; see ch. 2, p. 31-33 and 45-46.

¹²⁵ *Quaerite, miseri; nam talem fidem, qua deo inconueniens aliquid creditur, nos uehementius et uberius accusamus; nam et in illis quae dicta sunt, cum sic intelliguntur ut littera sonat, et simplicitatem corrigimus et pertinaciam deridemus. Et alia multa, quae uos intelligere non potestis, uetat eos credere catholica disciplina, qui non annis sed studio atque intellectu excedentes quandam mentis pueritiam in canos sapientiae promouentur; nam et credere deum loco aliquo quamuis infinito*

Augustine admitted that there are those in the church who need correction and instruction; but at the 'breasts of the Catholic church', such ones may receive the appropriate nourishment to bring them to wisdom.¹²⁶ It is clear that Augustine admired the 'pious and most learned men of the Catholic church' and their 'expositions ... in which they open the scriptures' (*mor. ecc.* 10.16).¹²⁷ Moreover, Augustine's implicit adoption of the role of teacher and his actions in writing *On the Morals* (see esp. 1.2) indicate that he also desired to emulate these teachers.¹²⁸ This is the first clear hint of a role in the Christian community for Augustine, and it seems clear that it was inspired by and understood against the background of the church.

Even though he did not lay claim to any official position, Augustine began to act in his writings like those who carried out what he described in *On the Morals* as the 'excellent (exalted) and rare offices of teacher (*magisterium*)' (*mor. ecc.* 28.55).¹²⁹ Augustine's emulation of such teachers may or may not have been conscious. The position of spiritual teacher was not new to Augustine in this period. Nevertheless, in this vein, he began to engage in an entirely new type of literary endeavor – that of Catholic polemical writings. His *On the Morals* set out to answer Manichee objections to Catholic Christianity and to defend Catholic teaching.¹³⁰ He described his works as setting out the teachings of the church – 'the divine teaching ... handed over only in the Catholic church' (*quant.* 34.77)¹³¹ – which is commensurate with scripture.¹³² A glimpse of Augustine's teaching guise opens in his apology when at one point, after he has been talking about the gospel as related in 1 Corinthians 15.22, he remarked: 'O deep mysteries! But I refrain; for I have not undertaken to instruct you [Manichees] in the truth, but, if I am able, to help you unlearn perverse views' (*mor. ecc.* 19.35).¹³³ The implication is that Augustine was able to instruct people in Christian truth but

per quantitatis quaecumque spatia contineri, quam sit stultum docetur; et de loco in locum uel ipsum uel aliquam eius partem moueri atque transire, arbitrari nefas habetur. CSEL 90. 20.

¹²⁶ *mor. ecc.* 10.17 *ad fin.*

¹²⁷ *piorum doctissimorumque hominum sermonibus, per quos in ecclesia catholica scripturae illae uolentibus dignisque aperiuntur, comparari queunt.* CSEL 90. 19. Ambrose would logically be one of the people included in this description.

¹²⁸ in action though not apparently in responsibility or office; cf. *mor. ecc.* 32.69.

¹²⁹ *sic in animo sunt quaedam, in quibus excellentia illa et rara magisteria non admodum desiderantur.* CSEL 90. 58; presumably the 'many pious and learned men' to whom he refers to in the next section. It is a role (or 'office') which he also ascribes to God (*quant.* 36.81, see n. 94; cf. *mag. passim*).

¹³⁰ *mor. ecc.* 1.2.

¹³¹ see n. 67 for Latin.

¹³² See also *quant.* 34.77, 78; *mor. ecc.* 7.11; 10.16; 28.55, 56.

¹³³ *O alta mysteria. Sed reprimam me; non enim modo suscepi docere uos recta sed dedocere praua, si potero, id est, si deus annuerit proposito in uos meo.* CSEL 90. 40.

would not in the context of addressing heretics.¹³⁴ While he implies that he does not consider himself at the level of Catholic teachers nor that he considers himself to be one of them,¹³⁵ it is still possible that he was emulating them in his own way.

To grant an official role corresponding to the type adopted by Augustine in his writings, or an official position of any kind, was a possibility in the church of his day. In the case of Augustine's North Africa, for example, Cyprian rose quickly to (and in) the clergy. In Augustine's immediate context, Ambrose had been made bishop despite a quite basic understanding of Christianity.¹³⁶ Both of these individuals transferred from high positions in the secular world to high, official positions within the church.¹³⁷ In fact, it is possible that such opportunities were suggested to or dawned on Augustine during this period – they were certainly clear to him by c. 389.¹³⁸ Yet, if this was the case in 387/388 he makes no direct mention of it. Ultimately, Augustine's writings and actions in this period indicate a growing sense of his role as a Christian teacher somehow connected to the church.¹³⁹

Nowhere is this sense more manifest than in *On the Morals*. At the beginning of the work Augustine stated that he was going to attack the 'two greatest tricks of the Manichaeans by which they entice the unwary',¹⁴⁰ by presenting his own thoughts 'in accordance with Catholic teaching' (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 1.2).¹⁴¹ Following his baptism, he also referred to the Manichaeans in *The Greatness of the Soul* as those who perpetuate 'wicked error' (*quant.* 33.76);¹⁴² and he warned Evodius against them as

¹³⁴ there may also be a sense here that although he could instruct he did not want to do so, or presume to do so, publicly (in written circulation).

¹³⁵ cf. *quant.* 33.76; for further discussion, see ch. 4, p. 139f.

¹³⁶ see F. Homes Dudden, *Saint Ambrose* v. 1 (1935), 66-69 (cf. also p. 58 and 61).

¹³⁷ a similar type of fate would eventually befall Augustine himself at Hippo, see s. 356.1-2; cf. ch. 5, p. 242f. (esp. n. 283) below and P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 138-139.

¹³⁸ see ch. 4, p. 148-149. In *mor. ecc.* 1.1 and 32.69 (possibly written at Rome, but according to Coyle, in North Africa) Augustine began to speak explicitly about clerical positions. In c. 389/390 he was consciously avoiding conscription into the clergy by avoiding sees lacking bishops; s. 355.2.

¹³⁹ this connection is not explicitly defined in our period and lies chiefly in the identification of the content of his teaching as that of the church.

¹⁴⁰ i.e. finding fault with the scriptures or misinterpreting them, and claiming to attain the most pure lives; see following note.

¹⁴¹ *Sed quoniam duae maxime illecebrae sunt Manichaeorum, quibus decipiuntur incauti, ut eos uelint habere doctores; una cum scripturas reprehendunt uel quas male intelligunt uel quas male intelligi uolunt; altera cum uitae castae et memorabilis continentiae imaginem praeferunt: hic liber congruentem catholicae disciplinae sententiam nostram de uita et moribus continebit.* CSEL 90. 4.

¹⁴² *Non enim audienda est nescio quae impietas rusticana plane magisque lignea quam sunt ipsae arbores, quibus patrocinium praebet, quae dolere uitem, quando uua decerpitur, et non solum sentire ista, cum caeduntur, sed etiam uidere atque audire credit. De quo errore sacrilego alius est disserendi locus.* CSEL 89. 218-219. See J.M. Collier's note to his translation in ACW 9 (1950), 213 n. 91, where he identifies this error with Manichaeism.

ones 'who place too much faith in the senses' (*quant.* 31.63).¹⁴³ In the same work (*quant.* 33.71), he seems to indicate that he was writing (or intending to write) a work against such error.¹⁴⁴ With his return to Rome and renewed contact with the Manichaean community there (among which he had lived in 383/384),¹⁴⁵ especially against the background of his own earlier involvement in Manichaeism he was stimulated to take on the role of Catholic teacher/defender against them. In this endeavor he employed the term 'heretic' for the first time¹⁴⁶ and expressly understood heresy as that which takes individuals out of the Christian community.¹⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that, largely because of his intimate perception of the dangers of 'heresy' and his actual contact with the critique of heretics, Augustine's 'teaching' role was balanced, between positive encouragement and instruction and defensive warning and polemic.¹⁴⁸ Had it not been for the Manichees at Rome, Augustine's natural interest in those who could grasp the incorporeal reality of God might have made his attitude toward the 'babies' and 'children' of the Catholic church even more distant during his early Christian years. His defense of the faith was intent not only on redeeming the historic message of the Apostles¹⁴⁹ and the whole of scripture¹⁵⁰ but also on defending the Catholic church as the bastion of true teaching and right practice.¹⁵¹ Still, the strain of self-sufficiency is present. There is no clear sense that Augustine *himself* needs the church or that he feels the need to hold an official position in it.

On the whole, Augustine's treatises from the period between his baptism and arrival in Thagaste reveal: increasing interest in Christian doctrine; increasing familiarity with Christian practices (especially ascetic ones), terminology and belief; and the first hints of an early ecclesiology as he fixed upon the concepts of the church as teacher, the church's catholicity, and the *mater ecclesia*. The emergence of these new elements points back to Milan and to the period in 387 to discuss what more can be said

¹⁴³ *Quapropter te, ut possum, etiam atque etiam moneo, ne temere aut in libros aut in disputationes loquacissimorum hominum nimiumque sensibus his corporeis credentium te praecipites.* CSEL 89. 210.

¹⁴⁴ 'concerning this sacrilegious error this is not the place to speak' (*quant.* 33.71). *De quo errore sacrilego alius est disserendi locus.* CSEL 89. 218-219. J.K. Coyle notes that this passage 'hints that by this time *mor. II* is in the planning stages. ... The closing words of the passage from *quant.* may be taken to refer to *mor. II*, 17:55' (Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 70 n. 291).

¹⁴⁵ *conf.* 5.10.18.

¹⁴⁶ see *mor. ecc.* 9.15, 'haeretice' (CSEL 90. 18); cf. 30.63; *lib. arb.* 1.2.4 (CCL 29. 213).

¹⁴⁷ *mor. ecc.* 10.17, cf. 1.2.

¹⁴⁸ see *mor. ecc.* 28.56 for Augustine's recognition of these two elements of Christian 'disciplina'.

¹⁴⁹ *mor. ecc.* 29.61.

¹⁵⁰ *mor. ecc.* 29.59-61; 30.64.

¹⁵¹ *mor. ecc.* 30.62-64; indeed, the linkage of the whole biblical tradition through to the Apostles to the church (they all have the same teaching in Augustine's view) is significant.

about the ecclesiological influence of the obviously central person for Augustine there – Ambrose.

AMBROSE'S INFLUENCE ON AUGUSTINE'S NASCENT ECCLESIOLOGY, PART TWO¹⁵²

The last chapter observed how Augustine was influenced by Ambrose in a number of ways that helped lead to his conversion. However, it was seen that this influence primarily affected Augustine at the personal level. Ecclesially significant ideas present in the early (*i.e.* pre-conversion) input he received from Ambrose do not appear to have been assimilated into his thinking. Augustine's personal Christian development is confirmed by the Cassiciacum writings, but his Christian activities and thought described in them lacked any significant ecclesiastical orientation.¹⁵³ Following Cassiciacum, in considering the period after his return to Milan, the strong ecclesial orientation of the many events surrounding Augustine's baptism were identified.¹⁵⁴ Ambrose would have stood at the center of this 'ecclesial baptism'. Yet, it is very difficult to assign with certainty any of Ambrose's extant works to particular contexts where Augustine would have read or heard them.¹⁵⁵ J.K. Coyle has cautioned in light of these problems that,

a much safer course is to conclude that, if in the extant sermons of Ambrose we find echoes of Augustine's early works, we can say that Augustine may have heard or read these sermons, or that the same ideas appeared in other works of Ambrose, now lost, but with which Augustine may have been acquainted.¹⁵⁶

Thus, adopting this perspective, the chronological proximity to Augustine's time in Milan of some of Ambrose's extant works, and the relevance of the subject matter of others, allow a re-construction of the ecclesial atmosphere which might have been created around Augustine by Ambrose's discourses. In the discussion which follows, the new ecclesiological ideas from Augustine's 387/388 writings guide a survey of some of Ambrose's relevant extant works to discern this ecclesiological environment.

Milan Revisited

The first works of Ambrose to be considered are those which deal with baptism, the creed, and catechetical instruction. Even though *De sacramentis*, *De mysteriis*, and the *Explanatio symboli ad initiandos* come from outside the time of Augustine's presence in

¹⁵² an evaluation of this significance was begun in ch. 2 (p. 53-64), where Part One is to be found.

¹⁵³ the intention to be baptized was present, at least by 387, at Cassiciacum; but how consciously important it was there is unclear.

¹⁵⁴ ch. 2, p. 54f.

¹⁵⁵ in agreement with the opinion of J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 112-113.

¹⁵⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 112-113.

the Milanese congregation,¹⁵⁷ they each derive from sermons to baptismal candidates or neophytes – types of sermons which Augustine must have heard from Ambrose. All three also discuss specifically the elements of initiation (e.g. the giving and reciting of the creed, baptism and the rites surrounding it, etc.) which Augustine experienced. A full survey of Ambrose's comments on these topics, or even of his works which focus on Christian initiation, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, a brief consideration of these three works, complemented by a discussion of other sermons which were probably delivered in Milan around the time Augustine was there, yields a representative picture of what Augustine heard from Ambrose that may have stimulated his thought about the church.

Ambrose's Presentation and Interpretation of the Creed

In the events surrounding Augustine's baptism, the receiving and giving of the creed would have figured prominently.¹⁵⁸ Though its authenticity has in the past been questioned, the historian is fortunate to have Ambrose's *Explanatio Symboli* which provides a window into the kind of presentation and interpretation of the creed he would have given to Augustine and other initiates. Quasten's judgment that works by Connolly, Faller, and Botte have 'confirmed' this work as 'genuine' can be relied upon.¹⁵⁹ According to Ambrose's *letter* 20.6, the handing over of the creed (*traditio symboli*) occurred on the Sunday before Easter after non-candidates had been dismissed and preceding the 'mass of the faithful'.¹⁶⁰

Ambrose began his 'explanation' by noting that, 'So far the mysteries of the scrutinies have been celebrated' (*expl. sym.* 1).¹⁶¹ These 'mysteries' are not well

¹⁵⁷ J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 170-172; cf. H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation, Studies in Christian Antiquity* v. 17 (1974), 17f. In beginning not with Ambrose's sermons, which have drawn so much attention and so many arguments in order to place them during the time considered in this chapter, but rather discussing works which Augustine almost certainly did not hear or do not come from the period at Milan, confidence has been placed in the second of O'Donnell's warnings (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 346) of the 'two errors' that 'must be avoided' in studies of Ambrose's influence on Augustine at Milan, i.e. 'of reading only the works of Ambrose that ... Augustine might actually have heard in 385/7'.

¹⁵⁸ the *redditio symboli* was the formal 'recitation of the creed' which the candidate for baptism had received in the equally formal *traditio symboli* ('handing over of the creed'). Close approximations of the creed are given in ch. 2, p. 51-52.

¹⁵⁹ J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 170-171; See also R. Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise* (1968), 38, and esp. R.H. Connolly, *The 'Explanatio Symboli ad Initiandos': A Work of Saint Ambrose, Texts and Studies* v. 10 (1967), 28-39, for similarities with other Ambrosian works, particularly *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis*.

¹⁶⁰ R.H. Connolly, *The 'Explanatio Symboli ad Initiandos'* (1967), 19 and n. 2. The place of the *redditio symboli* in the rites of baptism is discussed below, p. 93-95.

¹⁶¹ *Celebrata hactenus mysteria scrutaminum*. The Latin text is that of B. Botte in *Sources Chrétiennes* 25 (1961), 46-58, and reference will be indicated as here: SC 25. 46. Texts for Ambrose's *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis* are also from SC 25.

known but at least included a provisional exorcism.¹⁶² Turning to the subject at hand Ambrose continued, 'Now is the time and the day for us to hand over the creed; the creed which is a spiritual seal (mark) and which creed is [the focus of] our contemplation, as if an ever present guard, surely the treasure of our heart' (*expl. sym.* 1).¹⁶³ These lines identify ideas which would have stood out to Augustine in the likely event that he heard something similar. The spiritual nature of the creed (as well as all the elements of the Christian mysteries), the encouragement of meditation upon it, and its role as a 'guard' all are congruent with the early ideas of the church found in Augustine's writings from 387-388.

Ambrose first gave an explanation of the word *symbolum*; stating that it is of Greek origin and with a commercial meaning (*i.e.* that of *collatio*).¹⁶⁴ More interesting, however, is his account of the origin of the creed itself. The creed came from the twelve Apostles: 'the holy Apostles, coming together in one group, produced a summary of the faith so that we might grasp briefly all the points of the faith. Brevity was necessary, in order that it might always be remembered and recalled to mind' (*expl. sym.* 2).¹⁶⁵ The Trinity provided the framework for the creed.¹⁶⁶ According to Ambrose, the creed in turn indicated that: 'our faith is such that we should believe in equal part in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. For where there is no difference in majesty, neither should there be any difference in faith' (*expl. sym.* 3).¹⁶⁷ It is clear that in the *Explanatio* Ambrose was emphasizing the Trinity (no doubt with the Arian background at Milan in mind, among other things) and is likely that he would have in 387 as well.¹⁶⁸ He went on to affirm the incarnation and some parameters of Christology (*e.g.* Christ took on our flesh, a 'real body' and a 'rational and perfect soul',¹⁶⁹ was born 'by the Holy Spirit' and 'of the virgin Mary', etc. (*expl.*

¹⁶² R.H. Connolly, *The 'Explanatio Symboli ad Initiandos'* (1967), 19 n. 1. Augustine knew about this aspect of exorcism; see *beata u.* 3.18.

¹⁶³ *Nunc tempus est et dies ut symbolum tradamus, quod symbolum est spiritale signaculum, quod symbolum cordis est nostri meditatio et quasi semper praesens custodia, certe thesaurus pectoris nostri.* SC 25. 6.

¹⁶⁴ *expl. sym.* 2.

¹⁶⁵ *Sancti ergo apostoli in unum conuenientes breuiarium fidei fecerunt, ut breuiter fidei totius seriem comprehendamus. Breuitas necessaria est, ut semper memoria et recordatione teneatur.* SC 25. 46. Later in the same paragraph Ambrose proceeded to identify the creed as 'those things handed down by the ancients' (*ea quae primo tradita sunt a maioribus nostris*).

¹⁶⁶ *expl. sym.* 3.

¹⁶⁷ *et quod fides nostra ita sit ut pari genere credamus in patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum. Ubi enim nulla discretio maiestatis est, nec fidei debet esse discretio.* SC 25. 48.

¹⁶⁸ *cf. conf.* 9.7.15. Tensions with the Arians in Milan remained.

¹⁶⁹ *Iesus Christus filius dei solus carnem istam suscepit cum anima humana rationabili atque perfecta, et suscepit corporis formam. Corporis istius ueritate factus est ut homo ... generatus a spiritu ... ex Maria uirgine.* SC 25. 48.

sym. 3)), indicating that the creed was sufficiently clear on these points (*i.e.* that it 'naturally' implied his explanation).¹⁷⁰

Ambrose then turned from the Godhead to discuss the fact that the creed had been augmented in order to respond to heresies such as Patripassionism. In Ambrose's mind, this augmentation had been an understandable work of the 'ancients' who 'wanted to add health to sickness'; however, such 'medicine' was not needed, either then or at the present time (*expl. sym. 4*).¹⁷¹ Ambrose explained that the challenges faced before (namely from the Sabellians) had been removed.¹⁷² Now, in any case, there was no heresy which the 'creed of the Roman church'¹⁷³ did not answer. He wrote, 'Where the faith is sound the precepts of the Apostles are adequate: precautions, even those of bishops, are no longer required. Why? Because tares are mixed up with the wheat' (*expl. sym. 4 ad fin.*).¹⁷⁴ Ambrose made it clear that there was no room for adding to the 'mysteries' of the church. However, as his discussion of the creed illustrated, that did not preclude the need for the church, by various means, to make sure that its truth was properly understood and defended. The special emphasis on the Roman church is reiterated later in the *Explanatio* where the creed is again described as 'the symbol which the church of Rome holds' with the added description of Rome as the place 'where Peter the first of the Apostles sat and passed on its general meaning' (*expl. sym. 7*).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ *expl. sym. 3*.

¹⁷¹ *Ergo esto, medici fuerint maiores nostri, uoluerint addere aegritudini sanitatem medicina. Non quaeritur ergo si medicina non fuit eo tempore necessaria quo erat haereticorum quorundam grauis aegritudo animorum; et si fuit tunc temporis quaerenda, nunc non est. SC 25. 50* (note the addition of 'non (fuit)' in the SC text). At the beginning of *expl. sym. 4 inuisibilem* and *impassibilem* had been added to the creed to exclude Patripassians (*cf. SC 25. 49 n. 2 and p. 23*). But this addition was then abused by the Arians (*Ex illo remedio Arriani inuenerunt sibi genus calumniae. SC 25. 50*). I am indebted to D.F. Wright's comments here (and on the 'wheat and the chaff' below) and on the subtleties of this text generally.

¹⁷² 'especially in the West' (*maxime de partibus occidentis. SC 25. 50*).

¹⁷³ *expl. sym. 4: symbolum Romanae ecclesiae nos tenemus (SC 25. 50)*; see also n. 175 below.

¹⁷⁴ *Ubi fides integra est, sufficiunt praecepta apostolorum: cautiones, licet sacerdotum, non requirantur. Quare? Quia tritico immixta zizania sunt. SC 25. 50*. The reference to wheat and chaff here does not seem to connect directly to those uses found in Augustine's early writings from Rome and Thagaste (see esp. ch. 4, p. 162, *e.g. mor. ecc. 32.68; 33.76-35.77*), though it is quite possible that his attention may have been drawn while at Milan to the passage as one for his own future consideration. The sense here seems to be that Ambrose is arguing against any supplementation to the (Apostles) creed. This is because it could be mis-used; possibly by chaff among the wheat of the church. It is worth recalling Ambrose's earlier question (*expl. sym. 3. ad fin.*): *Numquid nos sumus apostolis cautiore?* (*SC 25. 48*).

¹⁷⁵ *Hoc autem est symbolum quod Romana ecclesia tenet, ubi primus apostolorum Petrus sedit et communem sententiam eo detulit (SC 25. 56)*; *cf. also sacr. 3.6: Petrus apostolus, qui sacerdos fuit ecclesiae Romanae. SC 25. 94*.

In sections five and six of the *Explanatio*, Ambrose gave the words of the creed,¹⁷⁶ reiterating his emphasis on the equality of the persons of the Trinity and the incarnation and work of Christ. At one point a significant comment is made about Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father. Christ was claiming his rightful victory in this action, yet he was not detracting from the Father, a sign of true love. Ambrose focused on this: 'Listen, people, you ought immediately to believe. Faith itself is brought forth out of charity. The one who loves never detracts' (*expl. sym.* 5).¹⁷⁷ Given Augustine's early understanding of charity as central to the relationship with God and as a paradigm for Christian relations,¹⁷⁸ such a comment from Ambrose might have presented a focus for Augustine's attention.

Also in section six, after yet another affirmation of the Trinity and following credal mention of the Holy Spirit, Ambrose turned to the other elements of the creed to defend their inclusion alongside such high statements on the Godhead saying,

This is the reason: as we believe in Christ, as we believe in the Father, so we believe in the church and in the forgiveness of sins and in the resurrection of the flesh. What is the reason? Because the one who believes in the author believes also in the work of the author [citing John 10.38 in support]. Thus you grasp this: now your faith will shine forth all the more if you place real and complete trust in the work of your author: in the *holy church* and in the *forgiveness of sins* ... [and in the] *resurrection* (italics mine, *expl. sym.* 6).¹⁷⁹

The 'works' of God the 'author' included the church. Just as with the remission of sins or the resurrection of real bodies, the church pertains to the realm of the tangible and the material world; but, also like forgiveness and resurrection (other 'works'), it is more than tangible and is presented here with a strongly implied spiritual aspect. Augustine, if he heard such comments, would have probably seen in them for the first time a clear indication of the church's privileged position to carry out the special work of God in the world.¹⁸⁰ In his writings of 387-388, the 'complete trust' that Ambrose urged in the church (one of God's 'works') was exemplified in Augustine's adoption

¹⁷⁶ see ch. 2, p. 51, for Hahn's approximation of the exact words (from *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der Alten Kirche* (1897), 36-40).

¹⁷⁷ *Audi homo. Debes quidem cito credere. Fides ipsa de caritate promatur. Qui amat nihil derogat.* SC 25. 52.

¹⁷⁸ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 11.19; 12.20. This will be discussed esp. in ch. 4.

¹⁷⁹ *Sane accipe rationem quemadmodum credimus in auctorem, ne forte dicas: Sed habet et in ecclesiam, sed habet et in remissionem peccatorum, sed habet et in resurrectionem. Quid ergo? Par causa est: sic credimus in Christum, sic credimus in patrem, quemadmodum credimus in ecclesiam et in remissionem peccatorum et in carnis resurrectionem. Quae ratio est? Quia qui credit in auctorem, credit et in opus auctoris. Denique, ne hoc ingenii nostri putetis, accipite testimonium: 'Si mihi non creditis, uel operibus credite' [Jn. 10.38]. Ergo hoc habes. Nunc fides tua amplius elucebit si in opus auctoris tui fidem ueram et integram putaueris deferendam, in ecclesiam sanctam et in remissionem peccatorum ... resurrectionem (SC 25. 52, 54; underlining mine, in place of SC use of all capitals to denote specific utterances of the creed, quotes replace the italics of SC).*

¹⁸⁰ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14.

of the view that all Christian truth was the same as the 'church's teaching'.¹⁸¹ It is probable that this idea of the church's divine role provided underlying support for his concentration on the church as universal, the teacher, and the 'mother of all Christians'.

Ambrose's concluding paragraphs restate the creed and reiterate that it is the standard of Christian faith and should not be modified since it was a work of all the Apostles.¹⁸² Finally, he closes with several warnings. Specifically, Ambrose warned that the creed was not to be written down because it had to be given and remembered.¹⁸³ If it were written down, the neophyte would neglect it and would not have to repeat it often or 'meditate' on it daily in order to remember it. Thus, he closes:

[The creed] is a great means of protection. Numbness of mind and body arises, [as does] the temptation of the adversary (who is never quiet), some trembling of the body, and weakness of the stomach. Then, review the creed within yourself and you will be healed. Indeed, repeat it very often within yourself, in yourself. Why? So that you will not make a habit [of saying it aloud], that when you repeat it aloud where there are *fideles*, you should begin repeating it among catechumens or heretics (*expl. sym. 9 ad fin.*).¹⁸⁴

This is more than another reference to the *disciplina arcani*.¹⁸⁵ Ambrose was also emphasizing the creed as a protective for those who have ascribed their trust to it. The church had just been described as an institution of God, and it was the church that handed over the creed. Augustine would have put such things together with the deduction that there was a need in the church for the masses of believers to be protected by those who understood God's truth spiritually.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, it is consistent with what is known of Augustine's religious life at the time to suppose that, for his part (especially considering his well trained memory), he kept the creed fixed in his mind from this point and meditated on its meaning often during his travels back to North Africa.

¹⁸¹ see above, p. 74-76.

¹⁸² which Ambrose justifies by citing Rev. 1.8 and paraphrasing the warning of Rev. 22.18f. (*expl. sym. 7*). If this work of an Apostle is so inviolable how much more the creed, a collective apostolic production (*expl. sym. 7*; cf. 2-3). The reference to the '*libro Apocalypsis Iohannis*' is also interesting. Ambrose describes this writing as 'canonical and ... of the greatest value for [grasping] the fundamentals of the faith' (*qui libellus canonizatur et maxime ad fidei proficit fundamentum*, SC 25. 54). It is the only explicit mention of a book of scripture in the sermon, but this emphasis, at least, was either not heard by Augustine or not taken over by him since he makes no use of Revelation during this period (see Table 18 of scripture citations in Appendix C).

¹⁸³ *expl. sym. 9*.

¹⁸⁴ *Magnum autem tutamentum est. Nascuntur stupores animi et corporis, temptatio aduersarii, qui numquam quiescit, tremor aliqui corporis, infirmitas stomachi: symbolum recense, et sanare. Intra te ipsum maxime recense, intra te. Quare? Ne consuetudinem facias ut, cum solus fortius recenseres ubi sunt fideles, incipias inter catechumenos uel haereticos recensere.* SC 25. 58; cf. *sacr. 1.4*.

¹⁸⁵ cf. ch. 2 n. 147 and 224 on this. The *disciplina arcani* did emphasize the picture of the church as God's receptacle of special truth.

¹⁸⁶ in fact, Augustine might even have understood an encouragement to bring those incapable of spiritual understanding to the church where they could be protected and at least know and adhere to what they should believe; cf. below, p. 107-109.

By considering some of his own sermons on the creed to initiates, it is possible to gain some insight into how Augustine viewed the creed. In *De fide et symbolo*,¹⁸⁷ one of his earliest works as a member of the clergy, Augustine said:

But in the creed, the Catholic faith is familiar to believers who have committed it to memory with as much brevity in words as the subject permits. This is in order that the faith may be set out in a few words for those who have been born again in Christ, who are beginning and being nursed in these things, but [have] not yet been strengthened by a most thorough and spiritual training and understanding of the divine scriptures. This faith must be expounded to them with many words [while they are] advancing and rising to divine doctrine on the certain firmness of humility and charity (*f. et symb. 1*).¹⁸⁸

The idea that the creed was to be remembered as a protective especially by those who cannot yet understand its meaning spiritually is present; but there is also an element that will not enter Augustine's view of the Christian community until c. 390 (in book 6 of *On Music*)¹⁸⁹ – that it is possible for those unable to grasp spiritual understanding mentally nevertheless to reach it (at least partially) through their way of life. A statement perhaps even closer to the view held by Augustine in 387 is found in *De symbolo ad catechumenos*¹⁹⁰ where he said of the creed,

These words which you have heard are scattered throughout the divine scriptures. But from there they have been collected and unified together so that the memories of slow-witted people should not have difficulty, in order that everyone will be able to say [the creed] and will be able to keep hold of what they believe (*symb. cat. 1.1*).¹⁹¹

Through the instructions and explanations of the church, and above all through the creed, Augustine believed that even the dull can grasp this synthesis of the spiritual scriptures and Christian faith and adhere to what they do not understand but do believe. This fact must have been at least a part of what spurred the 'insatiable and amazing delight I [Augustine] found in those days [after baptism] in considering the profundity of your purpose for the salvation of the human race', which Augustine later recorded in the *Confessions* (9.6.14).¹⁹² The implication of the preceding discussion is the same

¹⁸⁷ which was preached on 8 October 393 according to O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 434–435.

¹⁸⁸ *est autem catholica fides in symbolo nota fidelibus memoriaeque mandata quanta res passa est breuitate sermonis: ut incipientibus atque lactantibus eis, qui in Christo renati sunt, nondum scripturarum diuinarum diligentissima et spiritali tractatione atque cognitione roboratis paucis uerbis credendum constitueretur, quod multis uerbis exponendum esset proficientibus et ad diuinam doctrinam certa humilitatis atque caritatis firmitate surgentibus.* CSEL 41. 3–4.

¹⁸⁹ see ch. 5, p. 203f.

¹⁹⁰ a work unmentioned in Augustine's *Retractationes* and of uncertain date; cf. J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 399.

¹⁹¹ *Ista uerba quae audistis, per diuinas scripturas sparsa sunt, sed inde collecta et ad unum redacta, ne tardorum hominum memoria laboraret, ut omnis homo possit dicere, possit tenere quod credit.* CCL 46. 185.

¹⁹² *nec satiabar illis diebus dulcedine mirabili considerare altitudinem consilii tui super salutem generis humani.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 109; CCL 27. 141 (the order here is slightly altered from Chadwick's translation, *Confessions* (1991), 164).

as that of the *Confessions*. Namely, following his own experiences of initiation at Milan, Augustine identified the church, by the mysteries and institutions God had given it, as the institution of God's (especially salvific) work in the world. Significant as it may have been, however, the *traditio/redditio symboli* comprised only part of the elaborate process of baptism. Thus, the general presentation and interpretation of the whole baptismal process must be examined.

Ambrose's Presentation and Interpretation of the Baptismal Rites

Ambrose's *On the Sacraments* and *On the Mysteries* were based on sermons given to neophytes during Easter week.¹⁹³ Both attempted to explain in summary form the rites and experiences which the newly baptized Christians had just undergone. Thus, they provide a fairly good picture of the kind of interpretation of the baptismal rites that Augustine would have received from bishop Ambrose. In his book on *Christian Initiation*, H.M. Riley notes that Ambrose viewed the actions and words of the baptismal rites as a drama. The rites of renunciation and profession (including the *redditio symboli*) were the first part of the drama – as is shown by the bishop's provision of a 'mystagogical interpretation' for them in his writings.¹⁹⁴ The 'baptismal act itself' was the 'second of the major poles ... of influence in the liturgical drama'.¹⁹⁵ Thus, according to Riley:

Ambrose establishes a mystagogical framework, in which [the elements of the] ceremony of renunciation are elevated into salvation history. Elements of the past history of God's power and its presence in Christ and the mystery of the action of Christ in the sacrament of Initiation are shown in this first of the solemn rites of Initiation.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), notes that *myst.* was a 'careful selection and reworking of earlier homilies published around 390'; and that *sacr.* 'is the stenographers record of homilies given to the neo-phytes' – no date is given for this work (p. 171). J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 107) also notes that *sacr.* was 'made up of six sermons which would have been given to neophytes during the week of Easter' and that 'the date is uncertain'. The inclusion of selections from both of these works here is not on account of chronological proximity to Augustine's stay but rather because they represent Ambrose's comments on a process which Augustine did experience.

¹⁹⁴ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 48. In this helpful study Riley discusses the following with special reference to Ambrose: the rites of renunciation and profession (p. 27-28, 48-50; with a chart outlining the ceremonies on 42-44); the turning from West to East (p. 63-64); recitation of the formula (p. 96; chart: 86-89); anointing (pre-baptismal: p. 107-108, 193-194, and 205-207); baptism (p. 219, 243-261; chart: 225-227, and 300-301); coming out of the pool (p. 259, 305-312); the post-baptismal ceremonies (p. 353-356; chart: 357); post-baptismal anointing (p. 388-396; chart: 360-363); and the baptismal garment (p. 438-445; chart: 413-415).

¹⁹⁵ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 143.

¹⁹⁶ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 50. As has been mentioned just above, the identification of a special role for the church in salvation history was probably made by Augustine at Milan in response to his own experience of the regeneration of baptism. This idea also was stimulated by Ambrose's interpretation of scripture which read the church back into the Christian scriptures (see discussion below based on Ambrose's other sermons, p. 100f.).

In addition to identifying with Christ and receiving the grace of his salvific work, part of the imagery created in the initiation ceremonies was that of a struggle against the devil.¹⁹⁷ In fact, Ambrose says that, 'baptism was invented so that the deceit or treachery of the devil might not prevail in this world' (*sacr.* 2.18).¹⁹⁸

In his explanations, Ambrose created special spatial images (a sort of stage) in which the rites of baptism unfolded. He distinguished the baptistery from the rest of the church as the 'holy of holies' (*sancta sanctorum*, *myst.* 5). After the neophytes had entered the baptistery (following the 'Effetha' ceremony), they stopped well short of the pool itself and faced away to the East, looking to Christ.¹⁹⁹ This created what Riley calls 'a kind of combat arena' for the struggle with the adversary (the devil) 'between the door of the baptistery and ... the edge of the font'.²⁰⁰ In front of Augustine, Ambrose might have commented on this, saying something like 'You have entered therefore in order to confront your adversary with whom you had to reckon, renouncing him to his face. You turned to the East, for the one who renounces the devil turns to Christ' (*myst.* 7).²⁰¹ Having entered the baptistery and oriented themselves, the neophytes then received an anointing of the body which was interpreted as a preparation for combat, the image being that of a gladiator in the arena:²⁰²

We have come to the font; you have entered, you have been anointed. Consider what you have seen, consider what you have said; repeat it diligently. A Levite hastens to meet you;²⁰³ a priest hastens to meet you. You have been anointed as an athlete of Christ as if to contend in the struggles of this world (*sacr.* 1.4).²⁰⁴

There is much in this statement that would have stood out to Augustine, especially the idea of being an athlete of Christ in the world. The renunciation of Satan, which was

¹⁹⁷ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 49, 63.

¹⁹⁸ *Uerumtamen ne in hoc saeculo diaboli fraus uel insidiae praeualerent, inuentum est baptisma.* SC 25. 84.

¹⁹⁹ cf. *myst.* 7.

²⁰⁰ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 48-49.

²⁰¹ *Ingressus igitur ut aduersarium tuum cerneris cui renuntiandum in os putaris, ad orientem conuerteris: qui enim renuntiat diabolo ad Christum conuertitur.* SC 25. 158; cf. H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 63.

²⁰² H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 27, 49, and esp. 206.

²⁰³ it is worth noting that the 'salvation history' which Ambrose communicated by his interpretation of the Bible, subsuming of all biblical history as 'church' history and where characters in the Bible are presented as acting in almost the same ways and with the same knowledge as 'contemporary' Christians, is reflected (in kind if not in details) in Augustine's works from 388-389; cf. ch. 4, p. 164f.

²⁰⁴ *Unimus ad fontem, ingressus es, unctus es. Considera quos uideris, quid locutus sis considera, repete diligenter. Occurrit tibi leuita, occurrit presbyter. Unctus es quasi athleta Christi, quasi luctam huius saeculi luctaturus.* SC 25. 62; cf. *myst.* 7.

taken with great seriousness and involved spitting 'at him' in contempt, was the first element of this combat. The recitation of the formula of faith was the second:²⁰⁵

Remember your profession and never lose hold of the consequences of this promise. If you give bond to someone, you are held responsible so that you may receive their money; you are held bound, and if you resist the financier binds you. If you refuse, you go to the judge, and there you will be convicted by your promise (*sacr.* 1.5).²⁰⁶

Ambrose did not waste opportunities to drive home the seriousness of the commitment which baptism implied for the Christian in this world. Augustine was not in any kind of unique minority in aspiring to live in a special lifestyle of service to God following baptism (even if his conception of the 'spiritual' aspect of this life would not have been shared (or grasped) by too many of his fellow neophytes).

As mentioned earlier, all of the neophytes were expected to be 'spiritual athletes'; and all were presented with the hope and encouragement of the reward which would follow upon their obedience to Christ in life, just as they were now obeying and identifying with him in baptism. In the same passage, Ambrose continued:

You have professed the struggles of your contest. The one who contends has what he hopes for; where there is struggle, there is a crown. You contend in the world, but you are crowned by Christ, and you are crowned for the struggles of this world. For, although the prize is in heaven, the merit for the prize is brought forward (offered) here (*sacr.* 1.4).²⁰⁷

The goal of life lived as an 'athlete of Christ' was the crown of Christ. Yet, what would this have meant for Augustine? What was it that he 'hoped for'? No doubt the answer was quite complex and is impossible for the modern scholar to identify fully, but the most likely primary answer is that Augustine hoped to 'see God' as he had not been able to do before baptism on account of his corrupt flesh.²⁰⁸ The ideals which Plotinus had set before him, but which he had been unable to attain on his own, were the crown he desired. Indeed, his had grown beyond the Plotinian ideal to include not just direct vision of God but also the spiritual understanding of creation and divine revelation (the mysteries) which only God could grant. The full reward might be only found 'in heaven' as Ambrose said; but Augustine, if he heard such a comment,

²⁰⁵ in *quant.*, Augustine referred to the 'injunction' made in the 'sacraments/mysteries' to 'contemn all corporeal things and renounce this whole world'. 'For, other than [by this], there is no other salvation for the soul, or renewing, or reconciliation with its author' (*quant.* 3.4: *Ideoque bene praecipitur etiam in mysteriis, ut omnia corporea contemnat uniuersoque huic mundo renuntiet ... non enim alia salus animae est aut renouatio aut reconciliatio auctori suo.* CSEL 89. 135).

²⁰⁶ *Memor esto sermonis tui et numquam tibi excidat tuae series cautionis. Si chirographum homini dederis, teneris obnoxius, ut pecuniam eius accipias, teneris adstrictus et reluctantem te foenerator adstringit. Si recusar uadis ad iudicem atque illic tua cautione conuinceris.* SC 25. 62.

²⁰⁷ *professus es luctaminis tui certamina. Qui luctatur habet quod speret; ubi certamen, ibi corona. Luctaris in saeculo, sed coronaris a Christo, et pro certaminibus saeculi coronaris. Nam etsi in caelo praemium, hic tamen meritum praemii conlocatur.* SC 25. 62.

²⁰⁸ cf. *Acad.* 3.19.42 and *conf.* 7.10.16; 9.4.10; 9.4.12; 9.10.24.

probably felt that it pertained more to the average neophytes around him. He, on the other hand, as someone who had grasped the spiritual reality of God, could look forward in this life to real spiritual understanding and to the kind of encounters Plotinus had offered.²⁰⁹

The second part of the liturgy concerned the baptismal act proper. The general interpretation given to this in Ambrose's time was that of a bath of purification.²¹⁰ Having gleaned the various effects of baptism given by Ambrose in his Easter catechesis, Riley lists the following: 'salvation, healing, purification, new creation, new birth, transformation, illumination'.²¹¹ However, it is best to turn to Ambrose's own summary statement of the baptismal procedure in *On the Sacraments* (2.20):

You were asked: 'Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?' You said: 'I believe', and you were immersed, that is, you were buried. Again you were asked: 'Do you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in his cross?' You said: 'I believe', and you were immersed. Thus you were also buried together with Christ.²¹² For the one who is buried with Christ rises again with Christ. A third time you were asked: 'Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?' You said: 'I believe', and you were immersed a third time so that the threefold confession might absolve the multiple lapses of [your] previous life.²¹³

The special emphasis laid on the three questions/immersions is clear. Looking at how Ambrose explained each of these to the neophytes, it is clear that the first immersion was equated with burial.²¹⁴ The baptismal font was compared to a tomb,²¹⁵ and Ambrose even resorted to the natural science of his day to demonstrate that water was derived from earth thus allowing the Genesis curse (3.19, 'to dust you will return') to be fulfilled by the rite. The 'death' of baptism was presented as a real death in everything but the physical body.²¹⁶ The second immersion represented 'burial with

²⁰⁹ of course, these would still be limited by time (in frequency and transience) and only fulfilled in heaven.

²¹⁰ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (51977), 428-429 (cf. also p. 36 and n. 252). H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 214, also notes this and gives different biblical precedents for the idea (e.g. Col. 2.11-13; 1 Cor. 6.11; Eph. 5.26; Heb. 10.22) which underline its Pauline source.

²¹¹ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 219. Elsewhere (p. 223), he subsumes these largely under the benefit of 'dynamic union with the humanity of Christ'.

²¹² Rom. 6.4.

²¹³ *Interrogatus es: 'Credis in deum patrem omnipotentem?' Dixisti: 'Credo', et mersisti, hoc est, sepultus es. Iterum interrogatus es: 'Credis in dominum nostrum Iesum Christum et in crucem eius?' Dixisti: 'Credo', et mersisti. Ideo et Christo es consepultus. Qui enim Christo consepelitur cum Christo resurgit. Tertio interrogatus es: 'Credis et in spiritum sanctum?' Dixisti: 'Credo', tertio mersisti ut multiplicem lapsum superioris aetatis absolueret trina confessio* (quotation marks mine in place of all capitals, SC 25. 84 and 86).

²¹⁴ cf. H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 244 and 256. A theme which comes directly from Romans 6.1-4.

²¹⁵ *Hesterno de fonte disputauius, cuius species ueluti quaedam sepulcri forma est* (sacr. 3.1, SC 25. 90). Riley notes that archeological work done in Milan seems to confirm the similarity in appearance and even method of construction to sepulchers (*Christian Initiation* (1974), 247).

²¹⁶ cf. sacr. 2.19 and H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 248. J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 107) notes that 'The vocabulary of death/rebirth is unsurprisingly prominent in Ambrose's treatment' (referring to sacr. 2.6.19 and 2.7.23).

Christ'. Riley rightly draws attention to the somewhat novel inclusion by Ambrose of the phrase 'in his cross' (*in crucem eius*) in the second affirmation of faith.²¹⁷ It was noted in chapter two above how Augustine, at least in part, saw the baptismal union with Christ in terms of union with his humility.²¹⁸ For Ambrose, at least as important was the idea of association with the death of Christ, death to sin, and an association with the sufferings of the cross, the sufferings of the struggle against sin. He wrote,

For when you immerse, you take on the likeness of death and burial, you receive the sacrament of that cross, because Christ hung on the cross, and his body was transfixed with nails. Therefore you are crucified with him; you cling to Christ, you cling to the nails of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the devil will not be able to take you away from there [*i.e.* the cross]. May the nails of Christ hold you, who are called back by the weakness of human nature (*sacr.* 2.23).²¹⁹

Both humility and the determination to keep hold of Christ were probably emphases which stood out to Augustine in the clear presentation of baptism as an identification with Christ. Yet, in some respects the explanation of the third immersion is the most interesting. It does not follow the first two explanations by mentioning an identification with the third person of the Trinity.²²⁰ Rather, it is symbolic of the threefold answer of the lapsed Peter to Christ.²²¹ According to Ambrose, Peter answered a third time to 'repair that lapse' (*sacr.* 2.21).²²² So, the neophyte's third profession indicated the absolution from the 'multiple falls of the previous life' – the results of the *infirmis conditionis humanae*.²²³ If Augustine heard comments close to these, he would not have failed to connect his own cleansing and declaration also with the commitment to love for God²²⁴ (as Peter was asked if he loved Christ).

The final element of baptism proper was the reemergence from the pool. This was interpreted as a resuscitation, resurrection, and regeneration.²²⁵ 'Because baptism is a likeness of death, without doubt when you immerse and when you come back out of the water it is a likeness of the resurrection' (*sacr.* 3.2).²²⁶ The candidates rose to life which continued on earth, and it was to the kind of new life that should flow forth from

²¹⁷ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 250 and 255.

²¹⁸ see above, ch. 2, p. 35-44 (esp. 36 and Diagram 1).

²¹⁹ *Cum enim mergis, mortis suscipis et sepulturae similitudinem, crucis illius accipis sacramentum, quod in cruce Christus pependit et clavis confixum est corpus. Tu ergo conrucifigeris, Christo adhaeres, clavis domini nostri Iesu Christi adhaeres, ne te diabolus inde possit abstrahere. Teneat te clavis Christi quem reuocat humanae conditionis infirmitas.* SC 25. 88.

²²⁰ see H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 256-257, for comments and explanations on this fact.

²²¹ see John 18.15-17, 25-27; and 21.15-19.

²²² *ut illum lapsum aboleret* (*i.e.* of the denial of Christ).

²²³ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 257.

²²⁴ the over-arching framework for the Christian life which emerged in *mor. ecc.* (*e.g.* *mor. ecc.* 11.19; 12.20; 30.62; 30.64).

²²⁵ see *sacr.* 3.1 and 3.2.

²²⁶ *quoniam [baptisma] similitudo mortis est, sine dubio dum mergis et resurgis similitudo fit resurrectionis.* SC 25. 90.

baptism that Ambrose turned. Riley summarizes the further play on the biblical idea of water which Ambrose went on to make (in *sacr.* 3.3):²²⁷

Here ... the waters of the world, biblically symbolized as chaos, death, destruction, begin to lose their destructive force, and begin to take on regenerative force. Instead of destroying the candidate by swallowing him up, they are sufficiently transformed by God's redeeming Word to regenerate him to new life. As the chaos of the waters of creation brought forth natural life, so the waters of recreation, symbolizing death, paradoxically are able to bring forth supernatural life. The neophyte is not taken out from the world in his baptismal rebirth, any more than the fish is taken out of the water. Rather, the world loses its destructive force, because the neophyte is now like the fish who can swim. The unbenign waters of death have become regenerative waters. What is evil becomes for the baptized a force for good, for creativity, through the re-birth [*sic*] of baptism.²²⁸

Thus, the assurance Augustine received as he emerged from the waters of baptism was that he was thoroughly changed. The result was that he could have confidence in pursuing a spiritual life before God.

The last element of the catechetical program for *competentes*/neophytes was the series of post-baptismal ceremonies and services in which the practical but still mystical/spiritual element continued.²²⁹ The first of these ceremonies, following baptism directly, involved consignation and anointing – both performed by the bishop who placed his hand on the head of the neophyte and signed him or her with 'oil on the forehead' and 'an invocation of the Holy Spirit'.²³⁰ Riley notes that both

De Sacramentis and *De Mysteriis* give what appears to be a liturgical formula connected with this ceremony ... mentioning the invocation of the bishop for the impouring of the Holy Spirit in these terms: 'the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of holy fear' [*sacr.* 3.8, cf. *myst.* 42].²³¹

This anointing was indicative of the 'grace which comes to the seat of natural wisdom'.²³² Ambrose says in *On the Sacraments* (3.1), 'For wisdom without grace grows cold. But when wisdom will have received grace, then its work begins to be perfect. This is called regeneration'.²³³ This was the regeneration which would have

²²⁷ i.e.: *Imitare illum piscem qui minorem quidem adeptus est gratiam, tamen debet tibi esse miraculo. In mari est et super undas est, in mari est et super fluctus natat. In mari tempestas furit, stridunt procellae, sed piscis natat, non demergitur quia natare consuevit. Ergo et tibi saeculum hoc mare est. Habet diuersos fluctus, undas graues, saeuas tempestates. Et tu esto piscis ut saeculi te unda non mergat.* SC 25. 92.

²²⁸ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 308-309.

²²⁹ seen most obviously in the Easter week sermons *sacr.* and *myst.* upon which much of the present discussion is based.

²³⁰ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 354.

²³¹ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 355-356 (cf.: '... *spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii atque uirtutis, spiritus cognitionis atque pietatis, spiritus sancti timoris* ...'. SC 25. 96).

²³² H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 389; cf. *sacr.* 3.1.

²³³ *Friget enim sapientia sine gratia, sed ubi gratiam acceperit sapientia, tunc opus eius incipit esse perfectum. Haec regeneratio dicitur.* SC 25. 90. Ambrose himself refers to Wisdom 1.2 in this passage.

most stirred Augustine; that is, the regeneration of his natural reason by the cleansing and clarifying grace and 'wisdom' of God.²³⁴

Another meaning of the anointing was entry into the 'spiritual priesthood' (*sacr.* 4.3). Augustine was now a part of an ecclesiastical body which had been enabled to live and comprehend spiritually. Despite the fact that it was in this ceremony that the Holy Spirit was bestowed in a special way,²³⁵ Christ himself is described as sealing this mystical union.²³⁶ Even the baptismal garment was symbolic of the union of the Christian with the pure risen Christ²³⁷ – it was a bridal garment.²³⁸ Finally, the post-baptismal anointing was symbolic of the forgiveness of sins leading to the purity of life.²³⁹ Interpreting Canticles 8.6 as the words of Christ to the church, Ambrose expounded: 'Let your works shine and manifest the image of God, according to whose image you have been made' (*myst.* 41).²⁴⁰ As one now identified with Christ and part of a spiritual congregation that had been cleansed of sin and had received the Holy Spirit, Augustine would have been inspired to pursue purity of life reflecting the love of God.

Thus, the ceremonies surrounding Augustine's baptism certainly created a strong liturgical atmosphere within the church. Yet, the dominant images and aspects of the baptismal rites themselves focused on Christ and the individual union with Christ and his work (with all its implications) in baptism. The most striking elements about these rites for Augustine would have been the 'real' manner in which he was now cleansed from the impurity of his flesh and unified with the humility, grace, purity, and wisdom of Christ. He would have become even more determined to live a life of devotion to God, in continence and humility, out of love. His aspiration would have been the reward of such a life: a true 'spiritual' relationship with God and an understanding of his creation. This is not to say that, in the wider catechetical 'context', the church was not integrated into the explanations of the mysteries or did not provide the underlying framework for Ambrose's explanations – as the context and home of the rites of initiation and the truth of the mysteries. The aspect of baptism as the door into the institutional church, clearly demonstrated by the inclusion of the newly baptized

²³⁴ cf. *beata u.* 4.34; note also Augustine's first usages of the book of Wisdom in his writings of 387-388 listed in Appendix C, Table 18.

²³⁵ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 393-396; cf. *sacr.* 6.6 on Wisdom 8.6.

²³⁶ *sacr.* 3.8. In *mor. ecc.* 18.36, speaking in reference to Colossians 3.9-10, Augustine described Christ as 'the new man, the Son of God, who in the sacrament assumed [human nature] to redeem/free us' (*Uult autem intelligi Adam qui peccauit ueterem hominem, illum autem quem suscepit in sacramento dei filios ad nos liberandos, nouum. CSEL* 90. 40).

²³⁷ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 438.

²³⁸ *myst.* 37.

²³⁹ cf. *myst.* 35 and H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 442.

²⁴⁰ *Opera quoque tua luceant et imaginem dei praeferant ad cuius imaginem facta es. SC* 25. 178.

believers in 'communion', could not have been missed. In the rites themselves, however, though the church provided the context, it was not itself the emphasis or focus of attention. The primary encounter with the church in the baptismal rites was experiential, that is, Augustine encountered the church in the rites in terms of what the church was doing or providing and not in terms of discussion of the nature of the church itself.²⁴¹

Ecclesial Elements in Ambrose's Sermons circa 387

It is more than probable that Augustine's 'ecclesial baptism' at Milan not only sparked his attention to the role and significance of the church but also accounts in part for the fact that his earliest comments on the church emphasize its position as the mother of all Christians and a place of divine teaching and safety from error. The specific rites and instruction surrounding baptism were not, however, the only place Augustine encountered the church in Milan in 387. There will have also been a certain 'ecclesial atmosphere' pervading the environment of instruction and preparation created by the ecclesiastical emphases in Ambrose's congregation. Hence, the final section of our consideration of Ambrose's ecclesial input to Augustine will consider this more general context. A survey of Ambrosian sermons with possible chronological proximity to Augustine's stay in Milan yields an interesting picture of the 'ecclesial atmosphere'.

As discussed in the previous chapter, a number of Ambrose's works have been assigned by different scholars to the period in which Augustine was in Milan and might have been present to hear them. Dating arguments remain inconclusive, but it is reasonable to expect an evaluation of some of these sermons to provide an approximate understanding of the general ecclesial emphases which Augustine encountered in the Milanese congregation. In any attempt to explore the possibility of early direct literary dependence of Augustine on Ambrose (e.g. on his sermons), the debate provoked by Courcelle in his seminal *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1950; 1968) over the date and influence on Augustine of certain of Ambrose's sermons must provide the starting point.²⁴² The dating of these discourses (indeed of the majority of the Ambrosian *corpus*) is notoriously difficult, but Courcelle considers Augustine to have heard or read Ambrose's: *Hexameron* (a commentary of the Genesis 1.1-26 narrative, given on the successive days of Easter week), *De Isaac uel anima*, *De bono*

²⁴¹ the sort of balance of attention that has been observed above in Augustine's own earliest explicit comments about the church.

²⁴² P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (1968), 93-138. Courcelle's dating arguments and some of the debate sparked by them were discussed in ch. 2, p. 61f.

mortis, and possibly others.²⁴³ Courcelle's intent was to show that Augustine received his neo-Platonism, in significant part, from Ambrose and in particular from these sources.²⁴⁴ This objective was achieved, even if Courcelle's arguments for such exact dating and appropriation have not been incorporated completely into the scholarly consensus.²⁴⁵ In chapter two, it was observed that it is not possible to date any of Ambrose's extant sermons with the accuracy to place them in 387 with real confidence and certainly not possible to be sure that Augustine heard any particular sermon. In searching for ecclesiological connections between Ambrose and Augustine, direct literary appropriations have not been discovered. Furthermore, the chronological problems surrounding the sermons in question do not allow for exact dating. Nevertheless, the chronological arguments of Courcelle and others do strongly suggest that a number of sermons and treatises of the bishop may come from the years 386-388 and may be indicative of the kind of information Augustine would have heard when he was in a position to hear Ambrose.

Specifically, Ambrose's sermons on Isaac, Jacob, and his *Hexameron* contain information which appears germane and representative of those which Augustine may have heard.²⁴⁶ Thus, they will be discussed to discern the ecclesiological atmosphere which Augustine would have breathed while at Milan.²⁴⁷ That is, they are studied in the following section to determine what information they give about the church and, thus, the nature of the ecclesiological elements which surrounded Augustine in Christian instruction and worship. What is clear is that these sermons do date from the

²⁴³ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 78-138 (where Courcelle also suggests such sermons as *Iacob, exp. Luc.*, and *Exp. Esaiae* as possibly from this period; cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325). On the date of the *Hexameron*, Courcelle has received quite recent support in O'Donnell's recent three-volume commentary on the *Confessions* (v. 3 (1992), 251) where he speaks about 'Ambrose's *exameron*, a series of catechetical sermons from the week preceding Easter, which Augustine heard preached in either 386 or 387' (italics mine), though he notes elsewhere (v. 3, 68) that the date of this series of sermons is 'controverted'.

²⁴⁴ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 78-168.

²⁴⁵ cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 76 n. 1. W. Theiler's critical review, in *Gnomon* 25 (1953), 113-122 (esp. 117-119 for chronology), presents the problems in the greatest detail. The idea that there was a significant circle of neo-Platonizing Christians including Ambrose and Simplicianus has, however, been generally accepted (see e.g. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 79-114).

²⁴⁶ see ch. 2, p. 62-64.

²⁴⁷ cf. comments in J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 112-113, on this method. A comprehensive study of Ambrose's ecclesiology has certainly not been undertaken, but the principal notes of his ecclesiology have been highlighted by C. Morino, *Church and State in the Teaching of Saint Ambrose* (1969), and G. Toscani, *Teologia della chiesa in sant' Ambrogio* (1974), esp. 461-467. See H.J. Vogt, 'Ecclesia', *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1991), 261 (esp. end col. 520 and top col. 521), for a brief summary of Ambrose's view of the church.

period 383-391,²⁴⁸ and thus, that they enlighten the general conclusions from Ambrose's works pertaining to catechesis.

The Ecclesial Atmosphere of the Church at Milan

As indicated previously, the concept which stands out in Augustine's earliest comments on the church through 387-388 is that of the church as teacher. This idea was also present in the Christian environment in which Augustine moved at Milan and was linked to Ambrose.²⁴⁹ In *On Isaac, or the Soul* (hereafter *On Isaac*), a sermon which Augustine might have heard in 386,²⁵⁰ the church is described as having access to the fountain of wisdom (where the soul can 'fill its own vessel') and drawing on 'the teachings (disciplines) of pure wisdom' (*Isaac* 1.2).²⁵¹ Later Ambrose interpreted Isaac's waiting for Rebecca as a soul 'made ready for spiritual union. For she came already endowed with heavenly mysteries ... because in her ... there is clearly marked the beauty of the church ... The church is beautiful for she has acquired sons from hostile nations' (*Isaac* 3.7).²⁵² As often in this sermon, Ambrose then presented an alternative interpretation:

But this [passage] can be considered in reference to the soul, which subdues the bodily passions, turns them to the service of the virtues, and makes resistant feelings subject to itself. And so the soul of the patriarch [Isaac] seeing the mystery of Christ, seeing Rebecca coming with vessels of gold and silver [*cf.* Gen. 24.53, 63] like the church with the people of the nations, and having marveled at the beauty of the word and his sacraments said: 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth' [*Cant.* 1.2]²⁵³ ... What does this [statement] mean? ... Consider the church, in suspense for such a long time for the coming of the Lord, long promised her through the prophets. Or consider the soul, ... (*Isaac* 3.7-8).²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ J.S. Quasten, *Patrology* v. 4 (1986), 153-176; *cf.* P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (1950), 98-103.

²⁴⁹ the whole context of the baptism, baptismal preparation, and the services of Easter week was highly pedagogical and Ambrose naturally was the 'teacher' in this context. In his commentary on *conf.* 6.3.3, O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 341) notes that 'Ambrose shared Augustine's view that the bishop's role centered on his teaching from the pulpit'. More specific pedagogic echoes of what we find in Augustine will be discussed below. None of the conclusions here imply that Ambrose was an exclusive source for the concepts which Augustine discovered for himself at Milan in 387. I have argued above that Augustine's circle of friends and figures like Simplicianus (and vicariously through him Victorinus) also significantly influenced Augustine.

²⁵⁰ see ch. 2, p. 62-63 (esp. n. 240).

²⁵¹ *descendit itaque ad sapientiae fontem uel ecclesia uel anima, ut totum uas inpleret suum et hauriret purae sapientiae disciplinas.* CSEL 32.1.2. 642.

²⁵² *Talis erat Isaac, cum Rebeccam aduenientem expectaret praeparans se copulae spiritali. ueniebat enim caelestibus iam dotata mysteriis, ueniebat magna secum ornamenta aurium et manuum ferens, eo quod auditu et operibus emineat ecclesiae pulchritudo ... decora igitur ecclesia, quae ex inimicis gentibus filios adquisiuit.* CSEL 32.1.2. 646. *cf.* *Iacob* 2.5.25 also for Rachel as the church.

²⁵³ *cf. sacr.* 2.5-7, where this passage is also connected to Christ and the church.

²⁵⁴ *sed potest hoc etiam ad animam deputari, quae passiones corporis subigit et ad uirtutum officia conuertit repugnantesque motus sibi oboedientes efficit. ergo uel anima patriarchae uidens mysterium Christi, uidens Rebeccam uenientem cum uasis aureis et argenteis tamquam ecclesiam cum populo nationum mirata pulchritudinem uerbi et sacramentorum eius dicit: 'osculetur me ab osculis oris sui'*

Such interpretations exemplify the freedom with which Ambrose presented Old Testament passages in light of the concepts of the New, and in particular in connection with the church. The image of the church created was of an institution/entity which had been present throughout history and was connected to spiritual truth and God's mysteries. Specific elements from Ambrose's discourses, like the reference here to the church as being for all peoples, may have also caught Augustine's attention. Also in this sermon, Ambrose occasionally made special reference to the significance of the hierarchy and organization of the institutional church. For example, he said, 'Now where is the church, save where the bishop's staff and influence/grace flourishes' (*Isaac* 8.64).²⁵⁵ It is difficult to be precise about influence here²⁵⁶ but the deference to the hierarchies of the institutional church would have certainly been present at points in the sermons Augustine heard from Ambrose.

In *On Jacob*, a work which also might come from 386,²⁵⁷ Ambrose, following a citation of Romans 6.17-18, says that the teaching of God (properly gained in the church) is so important that 'it makes it possible for us to come to justice' (*Iacob* 1.3.9).²⁵⁸ Later he stated that, in the 'house of Christ' all 'may acquire for themselves the food of immortality' (*Iacob* 2.7.32).²⁵⁹ Interpreting the 'column', which Jacob erected in Genesis 35.20, Ambrose went on to say, 'The church is the pillar and foundation of truth' because it is the 'church of God ... in which God appears and speaks with His servants' (*Iacob* 2.7.33).²⁶⁰ These passages reveal the strong sense in Ambrose's sermons of the church as the divinely established place to

... quid est igitur: 'osculetur me ab osculis oris sui'? considera uel ecclesiam iam diu promisso sibi per prophetas dominico aduentu per tempora multa suspensam uel animam ... CSEL 32.1.2. 646-647.

²⁵⁵ C. Morino, *Church and State in the Teaching of Saint Ambrose* (1969), 73: 'It is obvious that Ambrose frequently stresses and emphasizes in every way the dignity and authority of bishops'. J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 337-338) makes a comparison between *Issac* 8.78 and 79 and Augustine's *mor. ecc.* 'lines 355-356 and 870-872', respectively. He also notes the different dates which scholars have assigned to *Issac* and the possibility that Augustine heard it. In his judgment 'There are resemblances [to *Issac*] in *mor. I* (cf. also the text comparison with the same [*Isaac*] passage in Commentary, 725-734) – the comparison between the *fons* and *uita*, the accent on the *good* – but Augustine does not choose to mention Christ here at all, and his context is a commentary on Rom. 8:38-39, which is not mentioned by Ambrose. One cannot therefore say anything more than that Ambrose (here or in some other homily) *might* be Augustine's inspiration – if there is not a source common to them both'.

²⁵⁶ Augustine's few references to the clergy in his early writings communicate respect for such positions (e.g. *mor. ecc.* 32.69); but not always for their holders (e.g. *mor. ecc.* 1.1).

²⁵⁷ P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (1968), 98; J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 325; P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 125.

²⁵⁸ *doctrina igitur facit, ut possimus peruenire ad iustitiam. potest ergo adquiri iustitia discendo ... intendamus igitur studio in formam euangelicae doctrinae.* CSEL 32.2. 10; cf. 2 Timothy 3.14-15.

²⁵⁹ *uere domus panis, quae domus Christi est, qui nobis panis salutaris aduenit e caelo, ut iam nullus esuriat cibum sibi immortalitatis adquirens.* CSEL 32.2. 51.

²⁶⁰ *Quanta mysteria, quia ibi est ecclesia dei, in qua apparet deus et loquitur cum seruulis suis! ... quia ecclesia est columna et firmamentum ueritatis.* CSEL 32.2. 51-52.

receive God's truth. They also confirm the practice of interpreting Old Testament figures and objects as the church or the soul as a viable one.²⁶¹ Ambrose also raised the ideal of the teachers of the church in this sermon. For example, he praised 'the man who imparts the benefits of holy teaching' (*Iacob* 2.3.12),²⁶² comparing such a one to a spiritual 'prince'. The fact that Augustine spent an intense period of catechetical learning in such an ambiance strongly suggests that the ecclesiological concepts which emerge in Augustine's writings for the first time in 387/388 (at Rome), especially the idea of the church as teacher, derive in large part from the period at Milan and centrally from Ambrose.

Perhaps the most important text for our consideration is Ambrose's *Hexameron*. Delivered in the 'Holy Week' possibly of 387, though more likely of 386,²⁶³ this collection of sermons, even if Augustine did not actually hear them,²⁶⁴ is certainly indicative of the type of communication he would have heard from the bishop during the days around Easter. In this series, the kind of 'gospel'²⁶⁵ Augustine would have heard and the terms in which (his) baptism was described and understood can be observed. Primarily, baptism was understood as what brought the remission of sins:²⁶⁶ 'in the church the effect of water [baptism] is such that the impurity of the wicked, having been cleansed, is assimilated into innocence' (*exam.* 5.1.2.6).²⁶⁷ Still, the exhortations and explanations Ambrose gave were also quite ascetic in tone. At the beginning of the *Hexameron*, Ambrose spoke about baptism in connection with the spiritual baptism ('in the cloud and the sea') which he thought Israel experienced in the Exodus:

At that time each year the Pascha of Jesus Christ is celebrated, *i.e. the passing over of souls from vices to virtue, from the passions of the flesh to grace and sobriety of mind*, from the unleavened bread of malice and wickedness to truth and sincerity ... [Thus] the person who is washed [baptized] forsakes and *abandons in a spiritual sense* that prince of the world, Pharaoh, saying: 'I renounce you devil, both your works and power' [*cf.* Jn. 14.30].²⁶⁸ No longer will that person serve him, *either by the earthly passions of the body or by the errors of a corrupt mind*. On this occasion every evil deed sinks [to the bottom of the baptismal font] like lead. Protected by good

²⁶¹ among other examples of this hermeneutic in Ambrose are the following in *Isaac* and *Iacob*: *Isaac* 4.17; 4.26; 4.27; 4.30; 4.31; 4.36; 5.48; 7.60; and *Iacob* bk. 2: 1.3; 2.9; 3.10; 3.12; 5.25; 6.28; 7.30; 7.32; 9.37; 11.47; and 11.53; *cf. conf.* 5.14.24.

²⁶² *qui autem piae doctrinae faenus inperitit, is est princeps, sicut lex dicit.* CSEL 32.2. 40.

²⁶³ *cf.* ch. 2 (esp. n. 237). This series of sermons has been used by Courcelle to establish the kind of neo-Platonic elements which Augustine may have heard from Ambrose (see n. 244 above).

²⁶⁴ contrary to the opinion of Courcelle and O'Donnell.

²⁶⁵ *i.e.* the basic idea of what it meant to be a baptized Christian, one of the *fideles*.

²⁶⁶ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (1977), 194-195 and 428-429. See also the preceding discussion of Ambrose's interpretations of baptism and the rites surrounding it, p. 93-100.

²⁶⁷ *nec mirum, quandoquidem etiam in ecclesia aquae illud operantur, ut praedonum abluta nequitia cum innocentibus comparetur.* CSEL 32.1.1. 145.

²⁶⁸ see above, p. 94-95, for comments on the significance of the renunciation of Satan in the baptismal rites.

works on the right and left, [the candidate] endeavors to cross over the waters of this life with step untainted (*italics mine, exam.* 1.4.14).²⁶⁹

The emphases here on the conversion²⁷⁰ of both the mind and the body, on the 'spiritual' side of the Christian life, on a 'sober' mind,²⁷¹ and on the outflow of such a spiritual state in the physical renunciation of the 'earthly passions of the body', all find resonance in Augustine. Interestingly, Augustine heard such encouragement towards ascetic achievement in a context which linked it to entry into the institutional church, *i.e.* baptism – literally the door into the communion of the faithful.²⁷² For Ambrose, the church was not just a place of spiritual cleansing, nor did its initiates disperse (or enter into spiritual isolation) after cleansing. In the church, 'all love each other mutually ... [the faithful] see this temple here, the holy place of the Trinity, the habitation of sanctity, the holy church ... The church therefore ... raises aloft the good life, protects sinners, and overshadows guilt' (*exam.* 3.1.5).²⁷³ The threefold work

²⁶⁹ *siquidem uerno tempore filii Istrahel Aegyptum reliquerunt et per mare transierunt, baptizati in nube et in mari, ut apostolus dixit, et eo tempore domini quodannis Iesu Christi pascha celebratur, hoc est animarum transitus a uititiis ad uirtutem, a passionibus carnis ad gratiam sobrietatemque mentis, a malitiae nequitiaeque fermento ad ueritatem et sinceritatem. regeneratis itaque dicitur: mensis hic uobis initium mensuum, primus est uobis in mensibus anni. derelinquit enim et deserit qui abluitur intellegibilem illum Pharaon, principem istius mundi, dicens: abrenuntio tibi, diabole, et operibus tuis et imperiis tuis. nec iam seruiet ei uel terrenis huius corporis passionibus uel deprauatae mentis erroribus qui demersa omni malitia uice plumbi bonis operibus dextra laeuaque munitus inoffenso saeculi huius freta studet uestigio transire. CSEL 32.1.1. 12.*

²⁷⁰ *cf.* the example of Victorinus (see the discussion of the Victorinus conversion narrative of the *conf.* in ch. 2, p. 33-44) given to Augustine by Simplicianus at Milan where the focus is on the need to come into the church in order to be a Christian. The point of the narrative is reached at the point of initiation (belief in Christian doctrine and coming to the church for its mysteries). Once the 'door' of the church in initiation was entered, the narrative concluded – as did the institutional involvement in the church of Victorinus, as we know him through Augustine (and maybe all that Augustine knew from Simplicianus). As argued in ch. 2, it is possible that the *conf.* reflect here an idea which Augustine actually held during 386-388.

²⁷¹ *cf. exam.* 4.1.1: 'Cleanse now the eyes of your mind, O man, and the inward gaze of your soul' (*emunda oculos mentis, o homo, animaeque interiores optutus. CSEL 32.1.1. 110*).

²⁷² J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (1977), 193: 'From the beginning baptism was the universally accepted rite of admission to the church'. Concerning ascetic ideas at Milan, concretely, we know that Augustine visited the monastery 'under Ambrose's care' on the outskirts of Milan in 387 (*conf.* 8.6.5). There, Augustine would have observed individuals who were fulfilling the call to live out of love for God in a particular 'sanctioned' structure. Yet, there seem to be indications in *mor. ecc.* that Augustine was aware of distaste towards ascetics (esp. extreme ones) in some sections of the Christian community, probably in the institutional church (*e.g. cf. mor. ecc.* 31.66; see Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 232f.). Aside from Ambrose's link to the 'monastery' at Milan, his exhortations to virginity for people who remained in his flock were well known (even notorious; *e.g. De uirginibus* 1.10.57; *cf. Coyle*, 233). He was impressed by Monnica's full fledged devotion to the activities within his basilica (*conf.* 6.2.2); but one gets the impression that Ambrose was not too bothered whether someone pursued that course of life, or one of personal retirement (*e.g.* such as Paulinus had adopted), or the life in the monastery. It is significant that in the works of Ambrose which relate most closely to the baptismal ceremonies and aspects of instruction, such as the creed, that he generally does not give specific (and certainly not limiting) examples or contexts of where one should live 'athletically' for Christ.

²⁷³ *sed omnes se inuicem diligant, omnes se inuicem foueant et quasi unum corpus diuersa se membra sustentent, ... quae mentem emolliant ad amores, sed concentus ecclesiae, sed consona circa*

of the church in the last quote is important. The church is at work setting forward the right way of living.²⁷⁴ It also offers the protection of right knowledge and insular communion for its charges who need it and provides absolution from sin. 'Echoes' of each of these are seen in Augustine's writings of 387-388.²⁷⁵ Other ascetic examples, presented as following naturally from life after baptism, are found in the *Hexameron*.²⁷⁶ The general point was that those who 'congregate in purity of heart and simplicity of mind' are found in the church (*exam.* 3.1.4).²⁷⁷ Augustine's desire to pursue a life dedicated to God was probably sharpened by the ascetic references he heard from Ambrose.²⁷⁸ Moreover, he would have felt that he was united, in dedication and mutual affirmation, with the general Catholic communion in his Christian progress.

Despite the exhortations toward ascetic pursuit, which Augustine must have heard in some form, it does not appear that these had the effect of bringing him into the realm of, for example, the increasingly established monasticism of the fourth century Latin West.²⁷⁹ He was made more sensitive to such organizations by the bishop of Milan,²⁸⁰ but the primary importance of the ascetic emphases Augustine heard was to point him toward an individual ideal.²⁸¹ Augustine's conversion had been primarily a personal affair and particularly difficult on account of moral challenges. The words of Ambrose in *Hexameron* 3.13.56 seem particularly apt for Augustine's ears: 'Let no

dei laudes populi uox et pia uita delectet, ... templum istud, sacrarium trinitatis, sanctitatis domicilium, ecclesiam sanctam, in qua refulgent aulaea caelestia, ... habet ergo aulaea, quibus ad tollit bonam uitam, peccata tegit, culpam obumbrat. haec est ecclesia. CSEL 32.1.1. 61-62.

²⁷⁴ the life of true happiness, devotion to God; cf. Augustine, *mor. ecc.* 6.10f.

²⁷⁵ see above p. 75-80, etc.

²⁷⁶ examples include 'frugal living' (*exam.* 3.7.28, *exemplum itaque frugalitatis, magisterium parsimoniae est herbae simplicis uictu holerisque uilis aut pomi contentos esse omnes oportere, quem natura optulit, quem liberalitas dei prima donauit.* CSEL 32.1.1. 77), also cf. 3.12.50-52; 5.17.57; 5.19.62; 6.8.53; as well as warnings away from extremism toward balance, e.g. 5.19.63.

²⁷⁷ *congregata est fides, congregata est puritas animi mentisque simplicitas.* CSEL 32.1.1. 61.

²⁷⁸ Augustine's interest at Rome in ascetic claims, and to defend against Manichee attacks on the general ascetic caliber of Catholic Christians (*retr.* 1.7.1; cf. *mor. ecc.* 1.1), may have developed partially out of this sharpening.

²⁷⁹ we know that he observed such groups at Rome in 388 (cf. *mor. ecc.* 31.65f.), but these things contributed to his own progress towards assembling (rather than joining) a community that manifested ascetic elements. Only gradually did this move to the point where perhaps it could be considered in Thagaste, c. 391, to be a 'monastery' (see below, ch. 4 and 5).

²⁸⁰ we have already noted Augustine's visit to the monastery 'under Ambrose's care' in Milan. We note also O. Perler's comments (*Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 144): 'Déjà cependant, ce qui ne serait jamais arrivé auparavant, il s'était mis à rendre visite hors des murs de la ville aux moines du couvent qu'Ambroise patronnait [citing *conf.* 8.6.15] et que dirigeait un prêtre excellent et savant' (citing *mor. ecc.* 33.70; and giving reference to P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (1950), 217-221).

²⁸¹ as discussed above, this ideal may have found some personification in Augustine's mind in those he called teachers of the church. His concern was principally the spiritual understanding of God, and purity of life was seen in relation to this (cf. *mor. ecc.* 20.37). The priority was what was being pursued, then the manner of pursuit (see the contrast of Manichee and Catholic observances in *mor. ecc.* 34.74, or the various Christian examples in *mor. ecc.* 31.65f.).

one, found on the uncertain ground of either adolescence or intemperance, despair of his own conversion'.²⁸² Augustine, very sensitive to his past, especially in the moral arena, would have taken great comfort, and even confidence, from one such as Ambrose. Earlier Ambrose had spoken of the members of the church in terms of a vine – those 'who are planted with the root of faith and are held in check by the vine-shoots of humility' (*exam.* 3.12.50).²⁸³ Augustine, if he heard this, was assured that he was not free from all sin, but that through baptism and the holy life which was to follow he was on track toward the ideal of a holy man of 'perfect maturity':

a man perfect in this way will not ordinarily be frightened by cold death nor harmed by the heat of the sun of iniquity, because a spiritual grace overshadows him, ... defending him from the lusts and burning desires of the flesh (*exam.* 3.12.52).²⁸⁴

In *On the Morals* (31.65), Augustine described the Eastern anchorites as 'perfect Christians'.²⁸⁵ Discussing the 'Pachomian' monks to which Augustine refers in *On the Morals* (31.67-68), Coyle observes that 'Augustine here envisions the monk as the ideal "philosopher", who literally removes himself from all earthly distractions in order to more perfectly contemplate the Divine. This is a development over the first association of "philosophia" with "philocalia" in *Acad.*'²⁸⁶ This ascetic ideal probably combined with Augustine's pursuit of a Christian life of true philosophy and the emphasis on discovery and teaching in his Roman writings which was noted above. Neither the ideal of the Catholic teacher nor the ideal of the devoted ascetic were the determining factors in Augustine's course of life. His was a personal commitment to serve and understand God in a way which emulated aspects from both of these groups.

In Ambrose's *Hexameron*, God's provisions for the defense of the church (*i.e.* for its separation from the worldly focuses on wealth and power, and of sound teaching to combat errant doctrine or the ignorance of some believers) are described in terms which again highlight the position of teacher. 'He [God] placed in the church a tower, of Apostles, prophets, and especially teachers, ready and able to put forward the peace of

²⁸² *nemo ergo positus uel in adulescentiae uel intemperantiae lubrico de sui conuersione desperet.*

CSEL 32.1.1. 99. It is understandable that people would have despaired of being able to fulfill the kind of life exhorted to neophytes (*cf.* discussion above (*esp.* block quotes), p. 94-97).

²⁸³ *huius est similis plebs ecclesiae, quae uelut quadam fidei radice plantatur et reprimatur humilitatis propagine.* *CSEL* 32.1.1. 92.

²⁸⁴ *huic uiro perfecto nec frigus horrendae mortis nec sol iniquitatis nocere consuevit, quia obumbrat ei gratia spiritalis et omnia mundanae cupiditatis et corporeae libidinis restinguit incendia, defendit ardore.* *CSEL* 32.1.1. 95.

²⁸⁵ it would seem that the 'perfect life' which appealed to Augustine in *ord.* 2.9.26, but which was not clearly related to Christian institutions in that work, has found its proper home inside the universal church in its asceticism; *cf. mor. ecc.* 28.56 *ad fin.*

²⁸⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 401.

the church' (*exam.* 3.12.50).²⁸⁷ Even though all the different members were equal in initiation to the Catholic church,²⁸⁸ a spiritual/intellectual gradation was implied in the idea that certain ones formed the 'tough leaves' which protect the 'fruit of a softer quality' in the church (*exam.* 3.14.59).²⁸⁹ In what seems a section of the sermon particularly significant to this study, Ambrose said,

Where, therefore, there is tender fruit, there is found the thicker covering and protection of the leaves. On the other hand, where the fruit is sturdier, there the leaves are more delicate, as the 'evil' tree teaches. In the case of the sturdier apple there is not much need for additional protection, for the very thickness of the protective shade would harm rather than help the fruit (*exam.* 3.14.59).²⁹⁰

This statement would have fit neatly with Augustine's intellectual program of the time and his ideal of the perfect man. The images in this quote may indicate an influence which led Augustine to adopt his first role related to the church – that of an affiliated but freelance Catholic defender/teacher²⁹¹ – while not feeling a *need* for involvement in or with the institutional church.²⁹² In this passage from the *Hexameron*, Ambrose communicated that there would be sturdier and weaker Christians in the church (on the tree). The weaker ones needed the protection of the church (the tree, *e.g.* its protective leaves). But the sturdier ones did not need much protection at all once they had ripened; in fact, they needed to fend for themselves in order to stay vigorous. Implied in Ambrose's imagery was the notion that small parts of the tree (*e.g.* thick leaves, sturdy fruit) had special individual and collective roles to play as part of the tree. So here, as in other Ambrosian passages, one encounters the concept of the church as an object which embraces all types of Christians: some who need to be held tightly in its

²⁸⁷ *posuit in ecclesia uelut turrem apostolorum et prophetarum atque doctorum, qui solent pro ecclesiae pace praetendere. ... nihil enim magis mentem onerat quam istius mundi sollicitudo et cupiditas uel pecuniae uel potentiae.* CSEL 32.1.1. 92-93.

²⁸⁸ *exam.* 3.12.51: 'To all in the church there is one, equal liberty; all there share justice and favor in common' (*omnibus sit in ecclesia par atque una libertas, omnibus inperitatur iustitia communis et gratia.* CSEL 32.1.1. 93).

²⁸⁹ *quanta deinde domini prouidentia est, ut ubi mollior fructus, ibi folii crassitudo ualidius tegimentum tuendo deferat pomo, quod uidemus in fructu ficulneae.* CSEL 32.1.1. 100.

²⁹⁰ *ubi ergo teneri fructus ibi crassiora tegmina et munimenta foliorum; contra autem ubi fructus ualidiores ibi teneriora folia, ut malus arbor docet. pomum enim ualidius non multo indiget protectionis auxilio; nam ipsa protectionis crassioris umbra pomo nocere plus posset.* CSEL 32.1.1. 101.

²⁹¹ *cf. esp. quant.* 33.76, cited and discussed above, p. 78-80.

²⁹² this does not imply that Augustine did not desire to be present and/or active in the institutional church or that he felt it was preferable to be loosely affiliated to the institutional church. Yet, no explicit record between Augustine's baptism at Milan and (forced) entry into the priesthood in Hippo (ea. 391) exists of his attendance in any church – though there are indications that he was in occasional attendance at various places and certainly he was in contact with various church figures and officials (see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 224-225, for guesses as to which clergy Augustine had met by the time of *mor. ecc.*'s completion). We should not try to envision Augustine as actively avoiding the church in any sense of reprehension, but rather as having a warm affinity toward the church without any need for or motivation toward involvement in or dependence on its institutions.

protective, healing embrace, and others who ought not to be held tightly. Both distinctions have to do with teaching: the weak need the defense of the 'wise and learned' teachers of the church; and the strong are presented with the example of these teachers as ones to follow/imitate. Furthermore, Ambrose's identification of those wise enough to be teachers with the defenders and exemplars of the holy life²⁹³ would have reinforced Augustine's understanding of the Christian life (the pursuit of Christian 'true philosophy') as a holistic pursuit incorporating what would today be seen as both theory and practice.

In his sermons, Ambrose presented himself as a teacher – drawing out the spiritual meaning of the sacred texts.²⁹⁴ In the words of Peter Brown, he had no 'scruples about borrowing [philosophic ideas] from the pagans: he gloried in being able to parade his spoils from the pulpit'.²⁹⁵ In his expositions and demonstrations, Ambrose also exposed Augustine to examples of ecclesiological interpretation of the scriptures (especially Old Testament), which would later bear results in Augustine's early comments on Genesis, Song of Songs, Psalms, and other books.²⁹⁶ In fact, because Ambrose's sermons so often read the church into biblical passages, it is difficult to establish particularly significant scriptural texts in considering the ecclesial elements which Augustine would have heard.²⁹⁷

Other concepts which are among Augustine's earliest recorded ideas of the church, such as the universality of the church,²⁹⁸ the historical continuity of the church with the history of salvation (*i.e.* the patriarchs, prophets, and Old Testament in general, as well

²⁹³ *cf. quant.* 14.24; compare with Augustine's *mor. ecc.* 10.16; 28.56; etc.; *cf.* also the idealized presentation of the teachers among the clergy and in the ascetic communities which Augustine gives in *mor. ecc.* 32.69 (the bishops, presbyters, and deacons); and 31.67 (the *patres* of the Roman ascetic communities).

²⁹⁴ *passim*, but *cf. esp.* the lecture style comments of *exam* 4.2.7; an activity of Ambrose which is described in well known passages of the *conf.* (*e.g.* 6.3.4 and 6.4.6).

²⁹⁵ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 84.

²⁹⁶ among the examples of ecclesiological readings (*i.e.* interpretations of biblical figures and objects as the church) in Ambrose are the following from the *exam.*: the vine and the branches (3.12.50-51); church as a character in and/or described by the Canticles (3.13.53, 56; 3.17.71; 4.7.29; 6.3.49-50); the moon, in the light of Christ, as the church (4.2.7 – where he also refers to the interpretations of other authors; 4.8.32; 5.2.24.86); Christ the 'casket' of the church (5.2.23.80); Peter the 'rock of the church' (5.2.24.86; *cf.* 6.4.27; *cf.* also Augustine: *Gn. a. Man.* 1.13.19; 2.14.20; and *passim*). Augustine's early 'ecclesial' exegesis in particular connection with *Gn. a. Man.* will be discussed in ch. 4.

²⁹⁷ it is almost as if Augustine would have been hard pressed to pick out particular identifications of the church with Old Testament figures, events, or ideas, with any theological sensitivity for all the identifications he heard. Undoubtedly, however, he would have grasped that such correspondences existed, contained spiritually significant truth, and that the 'church' figured throughout biblical history.

²⁹⁸ *Iacob.* 2.2.9; 2.7.32; *exam.* 3.1.3, *cf. mor. ecc.* 29.61; 30.63-64; 31.65 (see also Ambrose: *Ioseph* 7.40 and *De patriarchis* 4.21 for the church gathered from the nations).

as the Apostles, martyrs, etc.),²⁹⁹ and the *mater ecclesia*,³⁰⁰ are also found in the works of Ambrose which represent the Christian atmosphere that surrounded Augustine in 387. For example, Augustine's several references to the church as mother in the period after he left Milan have been observed. In his commentary on 'ecclesia ... uerissima' from *On the Morals*, Coyle says, 'It is possible that Augustine acquired the idea of "ecclesia mater" from Ambrose: cf. *Ex. in evang. Luc.* 2.86 (CSEL 32.4/91.7) "Mater ergo uiuentium (cf. Gen. 3:20) ecclesia est, quam aedificauit deus ipso summo angulari lapide Christo Iesu" and *De uirginibus* I, 6:31 (PL 16/197C)'.³⁰¹ This is indicative of the way in which particular comments or writings by Ambrose encountered by Augustine in 387 may have sparked or clarified or given expression to his early thoughts on the church. Ultimately, the ecclesial impetus from Milan cannot be ignored. It was there in all probability that Augustine's ecclesiology began.

The relative silence of Augustine's own pen on his religious experience during his second stay at Milan has, unfortunately, been mirrored by the relative silence (e.g. as compared to the ransacking of possible sources of Augustine's philosophic changes and understandings in 385-386) concerning this time in the secondary literature. Augustine's silence was at least partially due to his busyness – with the activities involved in the preparation for baptism, with philosophical and theological interaction (as suggested by the incomplete sketch of what has come down to us as *On the Immortality of the Soul*), and also with his beginning of books on the liberal disciplines. Studies of the young Christian Augustine, not least the study of his early ecclesiological development, however, urge that the latter silence be redressed and more detailed attention be given to elements other than philosophical influences and their absorption in what appears to be a very important period in his life.

ASIDE: TRINITARIAN TIES TO MILAN AND *DE MORIBUS ECCLESIAE CATHOLICAE*

The attention to ecclesial influences at Milan in 387 above contributes to specific issues surrounding Augustine's early Christian development. One example may be in how the immediate and lasting effects on Augustine of the instruction and experiences surrounding his baptism influence the discussion of the dating and composition of *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*. J.K. Coyle has argued in his very important study of this treatise that the 'trinitarian excursus' in paragraphs 22-24 and 26-34 was

²⁹⁹ *Iacob.* 2.2.9; 2.7.33; *exam.* 3.12.50; 3.13.56; 4.8.32; 5.6.16; cf. Augustine: *mor. ecc.* 7.12 and 9.15.

³⁰⁰ *Iacob.* 2.11.53; *exam.* 6.3.13; cf. Augustine *quant.* 33.76; *mor. ecc.* 30.62; cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 395f. and 400f.

³⁰¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 395-396.

probably added to the original text after return to North Africa.³⁰² He supports his contention by arguing that

In earlier writings, where trinitarian allusions and formulae sometimes appear, Augustine's views are still strongly neo-Platonist in flavor; here [in *mor. ecc.* 14.24 and in the North African portion of *mor. ecc.* generally], however, there is a noticeable departure, manifest in the manner in which he cites Rom. 11: 36, to positively assert God's triune nature: ... This is, in fact, the first instance of an explicit treatment of the Trinity by Augustine. The allusions elsewhere in *mor.* I more closely resemble those in earlier works.³⁰³

It seems, however, that a viable reason for such a 'departure' from earlier writings could be the *formulae* of the catechetical teaching which Augustine received at Milan in preparation for baptism and the stress on the Trinity in that teaching.³⁰⁴ Such direct Trinitarian formulations were committed to memory during the handing over of the creed,³⁰⁵ and there is a strong possibility that Ambrose heavily emphasized the Trinity in his explanation of the creed before Augustine.³⁰⁶ Thus, input from Milan might alleviate the need for other later sources of this section of *On the Morals*.

³⁰² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 241-259 (esp. 241-251); for more details and comments on Coyle's dating of these passages, see Appendix A, p. 275-277. Being greatly indebted to Coyle's study in this thesis, I certainly would not want to associate his work with any accusation of silence about the Christian input which Augustine received in 387 at Milan. His work is exemplary in searching where others have been silent and in drawing out unattended points and sources. At the end of his discussion of the dating, motives, style, and content of *mor. ecc.* he writes, 'Obviously, this table [of the 'stages in redaction and a topical analysis'] remains in the realm of conjecture. It can only be hoped that further research will eventually expose its errors and/or accuracies' (Coyle, p. 94). The endeavor here is simply to suggest the possibility of one corrective.

³⁰³ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 245-246, where he records the passage: 'Deum ergo diligere debemus trinam quamdam unitatem,

patrem
et filium
et spiritum sanctum

quod nihil aliud dicam esse, nisi id ipsum esse. Est enim uere summeque deus,

"ex quo omnia
per quem omnia
in quo omnia".

haec uerba Pauli sunt. Quid deinde subicit? "Ipsi gloria!" Sincerissime omnino. Neque enim ait, "ipsis" nam unus est deus' (*mor. ecc.* 14.24; giving reference to O. Du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la trinité selon saint Augustin* (1966), 479-483).

³⁰⁴ teaching to which he refers directly in *quant.* written during the same time as *mor. ecc.*: 'I prefer to use the words by which these things have been introduced to me' (*quant.*: 34.77: *libentius enim loquor his uerbis, quibus mihi haec insinuata sunt.* CSEL 89. 225; see also 33.76 and 34.78). It is interesting that in this same passage where Augustine clearly emphasizes the specific words which he received at Milan during his instruction, he makes an allusion to Romans 11.36, the same passage that Coyle argues is employed in a distinctive way in *mor. ecc.* ch. 14 that was not possible in Rome. Whether this may support Coyle, in so much as no trinitarian connection is made in the *quant.* passages like that made in *mor. ecc.*, or whether it raises doubts about Coyle's claim that Augustine's trinitarian use of Romans 11.36 probably comes from an external written source, is a matter of interpretation; cf. Collier's translation in ACW 9 (1950), 217 n. 113.

³⁰⁵ cf. Ambrose's *expl. sym.* 2 and 9. Augustine's familiarity with Romans, strongly suggested at Cassiciacum (*Acad.* 2.2.5, and cf. *conf.* 7.21.27; 8.6.14; 8.11.29-30), should also be recalled here; esp. in light of his considerable usage of Romans in the parts of *mor. ecc.* that Coyle ascribes to Rome (see Appendix C, Table 18 and n. 10).

³⁰⁶ e.g. Ambrose *expl. sym.* 3 and 5; see above, p. 88-90.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ASCETICISM

Augustine's spiritual growth and Christian understanding in the period between Milan and Thagaste are obvious from his writings. In his section on the time Augustine spent at Rome in 387-388, O. Perler writes:

Le second séjour romain du citoyen de Thagaste nous montre le maître en pleine évolution spirituelle. Le nouveau converti exerça une étonnante activité littéraire qu'il mit toujours plus au service de l'Église. Ses premiers adversaires furent alors ses anciens amis manichéens ... Augustin compléta encore ses informations sur le genre de vie, peu édifiant, des manichéens. Le contact avec le mouvement ascétique et monastique qui fleurissait alors à Rome lui révéla d'autre part la haute moralité des disciples du Christ et lui fit saisir toujours plus clairement l'idéal qu'il avait choisi. Le maître participait aussi intensément à la vie liturgique de l'Église, ainsi qu'en témoignèrent ses souvenirs: tels, par exemple, ceux qui ont trait aux repas funéraires à Saint-Pierre, et aux différentes coutumes de jeûne à Milan et à Rome (*italics mine*).³⁰⁷

Augustine's orientation toward the church³⁰⁸ is clear even if his exact position in it or relative to its other members is not. With such orientation he pursued a spiritual life before God. In his spiritual development, religious practice was another area of life which manifested (and influenced) Augustine's thought about the church and how he might relate to it. In the last chapter, O'Donnell's helpful attention to the inescapable nature of cult in the late antique world was noted.³⁰⁹ This did not imply (nor would O'Donnell) a dichotomy between Augustine's religious practice and his intellectual preoccupations. In fact, the point of O'Donnell's comments is that these things were not distinct (much less exclusive of each other).³¹⁰ It has been shown how the idea of the 'spiritual' contains for Augustine both an intellectual and a religious or 'mysterious' element. While Augustine's primary emphasis during the period 386-388 was on the *intellectus*, the pursuit of this emphasis was not in distinction to 'religious' activities – the ancients did not separate theory and practice in their pursuit of philosophy.³¹¹ The writings at Rome contain places where Augustine's intellectual/spiritual conclusions point toward religious action.³¹² In describing Augustine's distinction in *The Greatness of the Soul* (34.77) between the great proximity of the soul to God and its essential inferiority to God, Colleran quotes from a passage in *On the Morals*:

³⁰⁷ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 146-147, where he refers, in connection with the last assertion, to *ep.* 29.10 (CSEL 34.1. 120-121) and to *ep.* 36.2.4 and 36.4.8-36.5.9 (CSEL 34.2. 33 and 37-39, receptively); see p. 120 (esp. n. 360) below, for comments.

³⁰⁸ initiated by baptism and evidenced most directly by his decision to engage in Catholic polemical writing, e.g. *mor. ecc.*

³⁰⁹ cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxiii-xxix.

³¹⁰ cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 271.

³¹¹ much less Augustine's 'true philosophy' that embraced Christian 'authority'.

³¹² i.e. the temporal actions undertaken as a Christian; cf. *mor. ecc.* 20.37.

Striving toward God is the same as longing for happiness, and the attainment of God is happiness itself. Now we tend toward God by loving Him; we attain Him, not by becoming what He Himself is, but by coming close to Him, by coming in contact with Him through an extraordinary use of our intellects, and by being internally enlightened and possessed by His Truth and His Holiness (*mor. ecc.* 11.18).³¹³

Though there are not many references to prayer or other religious practices in the writings of 387/388, there is no reason to think that the patterns of personal (and intimate communal) religious practice observed at Cassiciacum (e.g. prayer, scripture reading, meditation, worship) would not also have continued and advanced in the period after leaving Milan.³¹⁴ Augustine's concern in *On the Morals* is 'the way of life through which we attain (merit) to know what we believe' (*mor. ecc.* 20.37).³¹⁵ The proper conclusion of reason is to 'give our efforts to fulfilling the precepts of God with the greatest vigilance and devotion' (*quant.* 36.81).³¹⁶ Furthermore, the ascent of the soul to see God necessitated right living.³¹⁷ The truths which Augustine related in his writings (which are those found 'scattered through all the many writings of the church')³¹⁸ 'cannot be understood thoroughly unless one ... inquires into all these truths one at a time with the greatest diligence and discernment, having guarded piety and prepared the fitness and soundness of mind for perceiving them' (*quant.* 34.78).³¹⁹ All these indications confirm the idea that Augustine was seeking to advance in his religious life and devotion. Moreover, they may partially explain his focus on the teachings of the church and admiration of its holy and learned teachers in 387/388.

Athletic language such as that found above (e.g. a particular course of life, vigilant attention, great diligence in pursuit of 'fitness of mind') prompts a consideration of

³¹³ J.M. Colleran, *ACW* 9 (1950), 217 n. 111. He goes on to note how this perspective is 'alien' to the view of Plotinus in *Enneads* 6.9.10. The Latin reads: *Secutio igitur dei beatitatis appetitus est, assecutio autem ipsa beatitas. Sed eum sequimur diligendo, consequimur uero, non cum hoc omnino efficitur quod est ipse, sed ei proximi eumque mirifico et intelligibili modo contingentes eiusque ueritate et sanctitate penitus illustrati atque comprehensi.* *CSEL* 90. 21.

³¹⁴ the context of philosophical retreat at Cassiciacum lent itself to plays on the classical ideals of *otium* which were reflected by ancillary and anecdotal comments about the life of the community (highly valuable comments for reconstructing something of the atmosphere at the villa). Augustine's Roman writings, on the other hand, were written in transit and, sadly, provide no such trove of comments about daily life.

³¹⁵ *Non enim nunc de fide sed de uita dicere institui, per quam meremur scire quod credimus.* *CSEL* 90. 42.

³¹⁶ *implendis dei praeceptis uigilantissime et religiosissime operam demus.* *CSEL* 89. 231.

³¹⁷ Augustine would have understood that purity in this world was necessary for ascent in the spiritual realm from his first readings of the neo-Platonists (e.g. *Enneads* 1.6.5-6, see ch. 1, p. 19 and n. 134), but this idea and specific aspects of right living were now much more clearly grasped following his time in Milan.

³¹⁸ *quant.* 34.78: *Nam cum sint ista per tam multas ecclesiae scripturas dispersa.* *CSEL* 89. 228.

³¹⁹ *plene tamen intellegi nequeunt, nisi quisque in illorum septem quarto gradu fortiter agens pietatemque custodiens et ad ea percipienda sanitatem ac robur comparans inquirat omnia singillatim diligentissime ac sagacissime.* *CSEL* 89. 228.

how Augustine's thinking about the religious life and especially asceticism may have facilitated his involvement in the church. In the pre-baptismal ceremonies Augustine had experienced, the picture created by anointing the candidates was that of 'an athlete being rubbed down with oil in preparation for combat with an opponent'.³²⁰ Moreover, though it is true that the last five chapters of *On the Morals* (i.e. 31.67f.) and much of *On Manichaean Morals* may have been written after his return to Africa,³²¹ these writings still show that Augustine became quite familiar while in Rome with the monastic/ascetic movement that was taking off in the West.³²² Augustine was certainly influenced by the focus on the complete devotion of one's life to God, and his view of himself should be thought of in this light. However, Augustine was not inclined towards extreme ascetic practice. More than abstinence from the world, he valued the ability to use the things of this world without abusing: 'For possessing such things without clinging to them is much more admirable than not possessing them at all' (*mor. ecc.* 23.42).³²³ This was, in part, because of his cultural background and lifestyle. As Brown has noted, 'He intended to remain an educated man: as he wrote to Zenobius, some men deal with the wounds inflicted on them by the senses by "cauterizing" them "in solitude", while others "apply ointment to them" by means of the Liberal Arts'.³²⁴ Although these comments refer to the time at Cassiciacum, Augustine's continued pursuit of philosophy (e.g. in *quant.* or *lib. arb.*) and attention to the liberal arts and intellectual dialogue (e.g. *mus.* and *mag.*) make clear that following baptism he had not rejected all the elements of his previous cultured existence but the aspirations and lifestyle which had encompassed it.

Augustine was trying to live out the Christian life where he was, combining its aspects with his pursuit of philosophy in his own Christian circle. In short, his pursuit of the religious life may have encouraged consideration of the 'monastic' and ascetic trends around him, but it was primarily manifested in a personal framework for life that did not necessarily lead to thinking about or involvement in an 'official' ecclesiastical structure. There is no clear indication at this point that Augustine was intent on a 'monastic' community,³²⁵ though he does seem inclined to incorporate ascetic practices

³²⁰ H.M. Riley, *Christian Initiation* (1974), 27; cf. *sacr.* 1.4, 5 and p. 94-95, above, for the rejection of Satan.

³²¹ according to Coyle; see Table 2 and p. 69-72 above and Appendix A, p. 271f. for discussion of the chronology of this work.

³²² esp. *mor. ecc.* 31.69-74. Certainly in his writings he seems quite impressed with this general movement, although there may be an element of hesitancy concerning the extreme practitioners and their perceived lack of connection to the church (*mor. ecc.* 31.66; 32.69-70).

³²³ *Multo est enim mirabilius non inhaerere istis quamvis possideas, quam omnino ea non possidere.* CSEL 90. 48.

³²⁴ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 113; cf. *ord.* 1.1.2.

³²⁵ J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 216-220 and 222-224) makes the observation that monastic terminology was not yet fixed in Rome when Augustine was there (e.g. both *monasterium*

into his community. As often seems to be the case, Augustine's enthusiasm³²⁶ in pursuing those new ideas, practices, and endeavors which inspired him or caught his attention not only suggests that he would have interacted seriously with the different ecclesial influences that he encountered during the trip to Thagaste but also that he would remain in free control of his pursuit of the Christian life. Not one clear case of imitation of any of the life patterns described in the concluding chapters of *On the Morals*³²⁷ can be identified (though there are many points of influence and his absorption of different ideas and activities). Augustine was bent on the idea of a community³²⁸ lifestyle where philosophical discussion took place facilitating the ascent of the soul to contemplate God, and leading to actions which manifest the love for God that naturally results from an encounter with the divine.³²⁹ Yet, a clear statement that he felt this lifestyle would be found for him (or found exclusively) in the emerging, organized ascetic/monastic forms existent about him at Rome is absent in the writings from this period.

Augustine's explicit references to the Christian groups which he encountered in Rome probably derive from his writing in Africa in 388-389 and hence will be treated in more detail in the following chapter.³³⁰ Nevertheless, the references were based on the time in Rome, and it is clear that at the very least he observed and may have had closer contact with ascetic groups there. Coyle describes the intentions in the last chapters of *On the Morals* as they relate to the rest of the work, saying, '[Augustine] proposes as examples of true Christian perfection all the various forms with which he

and *diuersorium* were used for what we could call a monastery); and Augustine did not use the term 'monasterium' during this period (cf. below, p. 117-119). Augustine made no commitment in *mor. ecc.* or *quant.* to any of the ascetic communities he describes, though of course he was intent on living in community in Africa with his friends, and the admiration of these groups can be read to imply that he was prepared to adopt (absorb) some of the aspects of their communal life. The point is that just how things were going to work out once back in Africa was not yet clear in Augustine's mind. Augustine was one to *absorb* not imitate or adopt other people's ideas or practices wholesale.

³²⁶ a word perceptively used by Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 84, when he speaks of 'the enthusiasm with which he [Augustine] greeted every new influence on his life and threw himself into every new project'.

³²⁷ e.g. severe fasts (*mor. ecc.* 31.66); deconal structure (*mor. ecc.* 31.67); clerical offices (*mor. ecc.* 32.69), etc. Augustine's *diu. qu.* may illustrate that he became a sort of 'father' figure in teaching in the Thagaste community, similar in form perhaps to the *patres* in *mor. ecc.* 31.67 – known for their knowledge of 'divine doctrine' (*diuina doctrina*) – or the wise, erudite individuals who led the urban ascetic houses described in *mor. ecc.* 33.70. But the content of *diu. qu.* does not fit with the descriptions in *mor. ecc.* See ch. 4 for more discussion and for the chronology of *diu. qu.*

³²⁸ already anticipated by the group at Cassiciacum; or even exemplified in his traveling group in the 'service of God'.

³²⁹ *mor. ecc.* 17.31.

³³⁰ see ch. 4, Table 4 and p. 145f.

had become acquainted, whether first-hand or by hearsay'.³³¹ Coyle then lists these various forms in five groups.³³²

1. 'Those who follow the "anchoretic" or "Antonian" way of life in separating themselves from human society to live alone in the most deserted places [cf. *mor. ecc.* 31.66]'. These are the first Christian 'perfecti'.
2. 'Those who live a "cenobitical" life in the "Pachomian" style': in the desert also, but in common (cf. *mor. ecc.* 31.67-68). There were both male and female groupings of this type, separate, but often located near each other for practical reasons.³³³
3. 'The clergy, whose manner of life Augustine does not describe, except to mention difficulties in trying to maintain peace of soul while carrying out the clerical ministry in a turbulent world' (cf. *mor. ecc.* 32.69). Still, Augustine does refer to this as an '*optimus uitae modus*'.
4. 'Those who live a community life, but close to population-centres'. Again, Augustine mentions both male and female separate communities, presided over by men of seriousness, prudence, and pious learning; and women of 'great worth and experience in establishing guidelines' and 'training minds' (*mor. ecc.* 33.70).³³⁴ Summarizing this group Coyle notes that 'In all of these communities ... the keynote is charity'.³³⁵
5. 'Finally, even among the "ordinary faithful", there are countless Catholics who "use the things of this world as though they were not using them" [*mor. ecc.* 35.77]'. Coyle states, 'Many of the baptised manage to marry and possess land and wealth, yet remain good Christians [cf. *mor. ecc.* 35.78; 35.80]'.³³⁶

For Augustine, ranking of these groups was not important. His very extension of ascetic and even 'monastic' practices to various persons, such as the clergy most obviously, demonstrates that his was a view which did not see such practices as properly limited to one type of Christian or Christian group of people. What is clear from his descriptions (especially in their apologetic framework) is that his observations at Rome confirmed an understanding of the church as comprised of all Catholic believers and that the communion as a whole could be represented as ascetic.

In light of Augustine's comments on ascetic manifestations, it is worth noting briefly the state of Western asceticism and monasticism at the time when he was in Rome. As early as 356, Martin of Tours had founded a monastery in Milan (albeit a short-lived one on account of Ambrose's predecessor). He also had been in Rome c. 355-356, and he probably continued his encouragement of asceticism and ascetic

³³¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 205.

³³² the listing here is mine but see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 205f., for the five-fold breakdown and each introductory comment; see also *mor. ecc.* 31.65f.

³³³ cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 221.

³³⁴ *quibus item multis uiduis et uirginibus simul habitantibus et lana ac tela uictum quaeritantibus praesunt singulae grauissimae ac probatissimae, non tantum in instituendis componendis moribus sed etiam instruendis mentibus peritae ac paratae.* CSEL 90. 75.

³³⁵ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 207.

³³⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 207.

community there.³³⁷ Speaking of Jerome's first stay in Rome (where he was educated as a young man, c. early 340s-360s),³³⁸ Kelly comments that (pre 366) 'Monasticism of an organized kind was at this time just beginning to make a tentative, hesitant appearance in the west'.³³⁹ Coyle notes that at Rome 'an ascetical tradition appears to have been well installed by the time of Augustine's second sojourn' there.³⁴⁰ He assigns the 'reason for this strength' to Jerome's second stay at Rome between 382-384³⁴¹ and to pope Damasus (pope from 366-384).³⁴² For his part, Jerome, while he was in Rome, indicated that the ascetic tradition there went back to the time preceding the death of Antony, which was in 356.³⁴³ Certainly the stimulus for Roman asceticism was eastern.³⁴⁴ That the cultural climate was not always pro-ascetic in Rome is evidenced by Jerome's forced exit in 385.³⁴⁵ Still, between 382 and 385, he did actively promote ascetic living in the capital with the support of Damasus.³⁴⁶ He was representative of a growing number of persons in the western part of the empire who admired and tried to emulate 'eastern' ascetics. Roughly three years after this, Augustine wrote of specific ascetic/'monastic' communities in Milan and Rome in *On the Morals* and later in the *Confessions*.³⁴⁷ Still, western monasticism was certainly

³³⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 226 and 227.

³³⁸ J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (1975), 10 and 22.

³³⁹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 23.

³⁴⁰ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 227.

³⁴¹ for more details see A. DeVogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique: dans l'antiquité* v. 1 (1991), 201-398; esp. ch. 4, p. 201-234: 'Jérôme à Rome et ses contemporains (382-385)'.

³⁴² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 227.

³⁴³ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 227 (esp. n. 873 and 874); cf. Jerome's funeral eulogy for Marcella. Coyle (p. 228) notes that according to Jerome the indication is that the 'first seed' of ascetic life at Rome was the 'relationship between Marcella and the Alexandrians', though in Coyle's estimation there certainly may have been ascetic traditions before 340.

³⁴⁴ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 229.

³⁴⁵ on this, see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 233; and esp. J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 104f. Augustine (in 387/388) was aware of 'opposition then making itself felt against the "monastic" movement from within the Church' (Coyle, 232), suggesting that the feeling which Jerome had stirred up had not fully abated.

³⁴⁶ for this period of Jerome's life generally and for an account of the 'committed Christianity' outworked ascetically which Jerome promoted and was involved in at Rome and 'his contribution to the dissemination of asceticism of the Oriental type' there, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 92-94f. Jerome's *ep.* 22 (to Eustochium) is one example of this dissemination. Not needed if solely for Eustochium, this 'sizeable treatise laying down the motives which should actuate those who devote themselves to a life of virginity, and also the rules by which they ought to regulate their daily conduct, ... should be set in the context of an ascetic campaign which Jerome was carrying on in 383-4, with the pope's approval, not only among his circle of devout ladies but in Rome at large. ... He was deliberately using this [letter] ... as a platform for setting out his challenging programme, and also for exposing the rottenness which, as he saw it, was infesting great numbers of would-be Christians in Rome, including many clergy and professed ascetics' (Kelly, 101). *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1992), 430-431, provides a good summary article on Jerome, delineating his ascetic pilgrimage.

³⁴⁷ *mor. ecc.* 33.70f. and *conf.* 8.6.15; cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 222-224 (p. 222 states that it is 'highly probable' that 'the *diversorium* of *mor. I* and the *monasterium* of *conf.* [are] one and the same'). Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions* (21968), 218, thinks Augustine

not developed to an extent even close to that found in the eastern part of the empire.³⁴⁸ Indeed, the level of organization or the links to the church of the Roman communities Augustine described is not very clear.³⁴⁹ More recent scholarship has persuasively suggested that terms like '*monachus*' or '*monasterium*' (later standard) were not in use in the Roman communities at the time of Augustine's visit in 387-388 (though they were certainly known) further suggesting a period of formation and developmental change.³⁵⁰

In his consideration of the specific passages concerning asceticism in *mor. ecc.*, Coyle considers that Augustine was deliberately avoiding *monachus* and probably also *monasterium*.³⁵¹ His opinion is that this reflects not any original usage by Augustine

visited the 'monasterium Milanais' of *Confessions* 8.6.15, cf. *mor. ecc.* 33.70, in 387. Coyle (p. 208-224) evaluates a list of possible sources of the knowledge of 'the various manifestations of asceticism in the Catholic Church' which Augustine displays in *mor. ecc.* (and of which he had been ignorant up to the time of his conversion, cf. *conf.* 8.6.14-15 and J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 39):

a. Ponticianus and the *uita s. Antonii* (p. 208-211; for a detailed, recent study of the *uita* see DeVogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique* v. 1 (1991), ch. 1: 'La Vie de saint Antoine'. In volume 2 of *Histoire* (1993), 112 n. 15, DeVogüé is more sure than Coyle that Augustine had seen the *uita Antonii* by this point);

b. epistles 22 *ad Eustochium* and 24 *ad Marcellam* of Jerome (p. 211-221; both of which were composed at Rome in 384 and show knowledge of the *uita s. Antonii*. Coyle feels that 'there can be no doubt that Augustine had read Jerome's *Epistula* 22' (p. 214; see also "'Monastic" Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*', *SP* (1985), 497). L. Verheijen is not so certain: 'Although later than the letter of Jerome, and notwithstanding its likeness to Jerome's description of the cenobitic life, Augustine's text [particularly *mor. ecc.* 31.67] does not seem to depend on the letter to Eustochium' (*Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts* 4.32-35, *St. Augustine Lecture* 1975 (1979), 40-47). See A. DeVogüé, v. 1 (1991), ch. 5: 'La lettre de Jérôme à Eustochium sur la virginité (p. 384)' for details on the letter itself; and v. 2 (1993), 114-115 (cf. 145-147) for further arguments that this letter was an important source behind *mor. ecc.*);

c. oral tradition at Rome (p. 215); and

d. personal encounters, the 'final and most important source of his chapter on Christian asceticism' (p. 221-224).

It would be unwise to base too much on personal contact with the groups since exact record do not exist, but it is certain that some direct observations and also of direct information about these communities were had. Coyle finds the strongest literary resemblances between *mor. ecc.* and *ep. 22 ad Eustochium* in their discussions of 'the "cenobitical" forms of asceticism' (p. 212-213), while noting that there are other similarities to Jerome's *ep. 22* and 24 which may indicate borrowings. The details of the letter, esp. of *ep. 22.35* (cf. *mor. ecc.* 31.67), seem to confirm Coyle's judgment.

³⁴⁸ the particular tensions in Rome surrounding asceticism probably derived in part from the active (and often actively pagan) senatorial ranks of citizens there and still, at the time of Augustine's second visit, partly from a reaction against the more extreme ascetic ideals (and personality) of Jerome.

³⁴⁹ this is not to deny the distinctiveness of Western monasticism, which, in its early phases, was much more clearly church-related and sponsored than was case in East. It is notable that Augustine observes the role of a *presbyter* in the 'monastery' of Milan in *mor. ecc.* 33.70: *Uidi ego sanctorum diuersorium Mediolani non paucorum hominum, quibus unus presbyter praeerat uir optimus et doctissimus*. *CSEL* 90. 74. Further connection to the church existed for this 'monastery' since it was under the auspices of Ambrose (*conf.* 8.6.15). Such connections illustrate the fact that even in its early development communal asceticism in the West was closely tied to the church.

³⁵⁰ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 216-217 (esp. n. 827-831).

³⁵¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 216-221 (p. 216 n. 827 details the early history of *monachus* in the west and notes that the word was 'probably known to Augustine even before he arrived in Rome' since it was in use at Milan).

(or prejudice against Greek loan words, etc.) but was 'because the terminology substituted [for Jerome's] was then currently in use in the *milieu* where Augustine first came into direct contact with this new world opened to him by Ponticianus'.³⁵² This adaptation of local terminology underlines Augustine's personal contact with ascetics and ascetic communities in Rome during his second sojourn there. In his arguments against boasts by the Manichees of superior asceticism,³⁵³ Augustine drew primarily on his observations of these communities and his understanding of their motivation and functioning.³⁵⁴ For purposes of presentation, he used Jerome's letters (esp. *ep.* 22) to summarize the different types of asceticism – probably because a convenient summary was possible and seemed comprehensive – and to gain credence for these communities as representative of a universal element of the church.³⁵⁵

Another religious aspect of life which Augustine seems to have identified with the ecclesiastical community is worship.³⁵⁶ Speaking in praise to the church in *On the Morals*, Augustine stated that all those who are reasonable and understand Catholic teaching 'would indeed never want to worship God save ... within your bosom' (*mor. ecc.* 30.64).³⁵⁷ Earlier he had written that worship is the natural result of the perfect life of contemplation and that 'God alone is to be adored by the soul, since he alone is its maker' (*quant.* 34.78).³⁵⁸ Augustine quoted Matthew 4.10 ('For you shall adore the Lord your God, you shall serve him alone', cf. Deut. 6.13) as his paradigm in this same passage. Following this, Augustine proceeded to identify 'true religion' with the mutual encouragement and instruction that took place within the Christian community:

Let us realize that as far as is possible and commanded, we must give assistance to souls of our own kind [*i.e.* Christians] struggling in error, and realize, too, that when this is done properly, God is acting through us. And let us not arrogate anything to ourselves as our own, deceived by a desire of empty glory ... We should indeed be willing to help everyone ... This is true religion, this is perfect religion, this alone is religion' (*quant.* 34.78).³⁵⁹

³⁵² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 221.

³⁵³ cf. *mor. ecc.* 1.2, and *retr.* 1.6.1.

³⁵⁴ which in his view was based primarily on love, as opposed, for example, to Jerome's perspective which placed obedience as the basis of such communities. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 215.

³⁵⁵ Augustine repeatedly stressed the church's geographical extension and the fact that pursuit of the perfect life, *i.e.* of ascetic behavior aimed at contemplation on God and a life of love toward God and neighbor, was found throughout the church; e.g. *mor. ecc.* 30.64 *ad fin.* and 31.65 *ad fin.*

³⁵⁶ for worship terminology used throughout this period see Appendix B, p. 310-312.

³⁵⁷ *nusquam profecto deum nisi apud te atque in tuo gremio minime superbi et bene pacati uenerarentur.* CSEL 90. 68.

³⁵⁸ *Deus igitur solus ei colendus est.* CSEL 89.227; see also *mor. ecc.* 34.77.

³⁵⁹ *Errantibus uero cognatis animis et laborantibus, quantum licet atque praeceptum est, opem ferendam esse sciamus ita, ut hoc ipsum, cum bene agitur, deum per nos agere intellegamus. Neque quicquam nobis proprium uindicemus inanis gloriae cupiditate decepti, quo uno malo a summo in ima demergitur. ... Omnibus enim subuentum uelle debemus ... Haec est uera, haec perfecta, haec sola religio.* CSEL 89. 227. Augustine described all these things as to be found 'scattered through all the

These references make a clear connection between worship and the church and communicate a clear commitment to the service of others in religion. However, such references do not afford a well defined picture of Augustine's actual worship. Did Augustine feel that such worship, encouragement, or instruction as he described needed to take place in a specific ecclesial context? Perhaps his relationship to the larger church was satisfied by his writings alone (certainly his Roman writings were a partial fulfillment of this motivation). Perler claims liturgical involvement from reminiscences of opinions and statements made in the Roman congregation in *ep.* 29.10 and 36.2.4, 36.4.8-5.9. However, even if this is granted it is difficult to generalize and certainly difficult to adopt Perler's statement about Augustine's 'intense involvement in the liturgical life of the church' in Rome on this evidence.³⁶⁰ A hymn of Ambrose was cited in the *Confessions* account of the events surrounding Monnica's death in late 387, and Augustine certainly was familiar with the Psalms by this point in time. However, this familiarity is not remarkable.³⁶¹ Certainly the worship of God was near the center of Augustine's religious life, and Augustine did recognize that certain elements of worship and Christian communal life were reserved to or heightened in the corporate assembly (*e.g.* antiphonal chants and songs, preaching, rites,³⁶² etc.).³⁶³ Yet, it is uncertain if in his conception these facts necessitated regular involvement or presence in the institutional church and corporate worship or if the need for worship was satisfied with (*or* worship itself more to do with) personal devotion and adoration within the universal church but not tied particularly to church structures.³⁶⁴ The *Confessions*' record of Augustine's appreciation of corporate worship suggests that he would have sought out similar corporate experience after he left Milan.³⁶⁵ Whether he found

many writings of the church' from which he has summarized them (*Nam cum sint ista per tam multas ecclesiae scripturas dispersa, quamquam ea non incommode conlegisse uideamur ... CSEL 89. 228*).

³⁶⁰ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 147 and n. 2 and 3. There is nothing in the passages cited here which could not have been easily gained second-hand while in Rome. They do reflect later interest in knowledge about the Roman Christian community and its practices but hardly necessitate Augustine's 'intense liturgical involvement' while there in 387/388. The idea of staying away even from church services to escape the world was known at Rome (see Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 97, 101) and while it is difficult to see him in the exact light of Kelly's description, it is possible that Augustine's own lack of felt need for the church's continued instruction, the lack of education among most members of the congregation, and models of being discreet in one's attendance at services so as not to appear too pious, may mean that his attendance was infrequent.

³⁶¹ it is also attested by the references in his writings from Cassiciacum as well as this period; see Ps. 78.9 in *ord.* 1.8.27 (*cf. conf.* 9.4.8, 9 and 12). There are eight references to the Psalms in *mor. ecc.* (see Appendix C, Table 18 for a list); only one occurrence is found in *quant.* (Ps. 50.12).

³⁶² he does refer to the eucharist in *mor. Man.* 14.34 in quotation of 1 Cor. 10. 19-26 (*i.e.* 'the cup of the Lord', 'the table of the Lord'; *Non potestis calicem domini bibere et calicem daemoniorum; non potestis mensae domini participare et mensae daemoniorum.* CSEL 90. 119).

³⁶³ such as he had experienced at Milan (*cf. conf.* 9.6.14-9.7.15).

³⁶⁴ as with the spiritual contemplation of hermits; *cf. mor. ecc.* 30.64 *ad fin.* and 31.66, 67.

³⁶⁵ *conf.* 9.6.14 *ad fin.*; 9.7.15; and 9.7.16 *ad fin.*

anything so inspiring as the songs, chants, and sermons of Ambrose's congregation in Rome, or in Carthage, or in Thagaste is questionable. Furthermore, no record of attendance in a service appears until Hippo.

Indeed, it is not possible to say with complete certainty that Augustine frequented the church (congregation, building, etc.) at all during this time (or in fact until 391). O'Donnell has commented on Augustine as a life long church-goer, stating:

Augustine probably never 'missed church' a week in his life. He was a Catholic catechumen until 18, followed the Manichees enthusiastically for years after, and still participated, at least outwardly, in their cult while living with them at Rome. On going to Milan he takes up orthodox Christianity again. It is typical of late antique men that they are rarely (if ever) cultless.³⁶⁶

It is certainly possible that Augustine was a 'regular' in the congregation at Rome (and later at Thagaste). However, caution must be maintained, in light of the lack of any record of Augustine's involvement in the institutional church, the discussion of 'spiritual cult' in chapter two,³⁶⁷ and the example of Cassiciacum (where a sort of corporate worship may have taken place but where little need for the institutional church was manifest apart from the desire to go to it for baptism at a future time). Still, Coyle observes that Augustine never gets very close to the ideal of 'flight from the world' and comments that 'perhaps what he had seen at Milan and Rome demonstrated to him that to "flee from the world" is essentially a state of mind, not of geographical location'.³⁶⁸ It is probably fair to say that Augustine attended church at times during this period (maybe even regularly) but the exact frequency, intensity, and necessity (or importance) of this attendance must remain uncertain. Nevertheless, the individual pursuit of the spiritual life, the observations of the ascetic life, and the exposure and understanding of worship all were aspects which contributed to drawing Augustine's mind to ecclesial considerations.

THE CHURCH DEFINED AND DESCRIBED

In the preceding sections, it has become clear that Augustine's earliest references to the church are generally brief descriptions or definitions that contribute to making a particular point about religious 'ways of living' (*mos uitae*). That is to say, Augustine's Roman writings discussed the church in terms of what it does and how it provides (initiation to, protection in, and the framework) for Christian living. Extended

³⁶⁶ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 328 (see also v. 3, 21).

³⁶⁷ *i.e.* the possibility of gaining the same benefits as in corporate cult involvement though individual spiritual contemplation.

³⁶⁸ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 238. He feels that Cassiciacum 'is as close as Augustine ever came to taking the concept of "flight from the world" literally' (*cf. mor. ecc.* 21.39).

discussions of its nature and theological significance, however, are lacking. It may be possible, however, to identify a stage in Augustine's developing understanding of the church from these observations.³⁶⁹ Having had his eyes opened to the significance of the church while in Milan and having encountered a considerable amount of ecclesial information at Milan and Rome, Augustine responded by grasping a basic picture of the church which was congruent with his understanding of the truths and ideals of Christianity. The church was the means by which people entered into spiritual relationship with God. The church worked as God's teacher, and locus of authority, on earth. Augustine also responded to this new area of stimulus by seeking to add to his knowledge of the church's characteristics (as witnessed by the emergence of modifiers like holy, universal, mother, etc. with '*ecclesia*').³⁷⁰ These characteristics are occasionally given attention in his discussions (e.g. the church merits praise on many accounts, cf. *mor. ecc.* eulogy, 30.62-64); but most often the term '*ecclesia*' is just employed (or even assumed) as a supporting voice or authority for Augustine's statements and its admirable attributes are taken as given. Augustine has not had time (nor, perhaps, the inclination) to think through the attributes of the church and their meanings or implications. This opportunity remained for Thagaste. His experience of the church and its importance (in all its facets: institutional, semi-institutional, and universal) stimulated his response before his thoughts about the church had found expression or had even had time to coalesce.³⁷¹

Nevertheless, despite the lack of a full ecclesiology in 387 to 388, it is possible to gain insight into several aspects of Augustine's early view of the church by carefully observing the terms he employed to define and describe it. For example, he often used the term 'mother' church, which he connected to the view that all true Christians must come under the rubric of the 'Catholic church, most true mother of [all] Christians' (*mor. ecc.* 30.62).³⁷² His concept of the universal (or Catholic) nature of the church was also related to this: 'To you belongs such a multitude of the hospitable, the kind, the merciful, the learned, the chaste, the holy, and the many who are continually burning with love for God' (*mor. ecc.* 30.64).³⁷³ This is a precursor to the long line

³⁶⁹ ch. 4 and 5 will describe the way in which Augustine began to articulate an ecclesiology, a theological understanding of the nature of the church. Many of the ideas observed there are present during the time spent between Milan and Thagaste but as yet they lack coherence and connection.

³⁷⁰ see Appendix B, p. 289-291 for the use of *ecclesia* with qualifiers and generally.

³⁷¹ it is worth noting Coyle's general comment (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 262) in his study of *mor. ecc.* that 'Augustine had not yet had sufficient time to consider all the implications of the Faith so recently but so completely embraced; but "De moribus" is the proof that such a consideration had already been launched upon its long and fruitful way'.

³⁷² *ecclesia catholica, mater Christianorum uerissima*. CSEL 90. 65.

³⁷³ *Merito tibi tam multi hospitales, multi misericordes, multi officiosi, multi docti, multi casti, multi sancti, multi usque adeo dei amore flagrant*. CSEL 90. 68-69. See also *mor. ecc.* 30.63.

of deeper Augustinian consideration of the nature of the Christian community on earth. At this stage in Augustine's thought, the church embraced all Christians by merit of its universal presence and its participation and continuation of God's salvific plan since all Christians must come into the communion of God through the 'door' of its rites. There is also a spiritual distinction between the members of this universal and unified church. Some of them can grasp spiritual reality and others cannot (or cannot yet). But the kind of distinction between visible and invisible that will be found at Thagaste in *On True Religion* (culminating later in *ciu.*) is not yet present.³⁷⁴

In any case, Augustine clearly is *beginning* to think of the church theologically. The church played a significant role in his understanding of salvation. Summarizing Augustine's argument in sections 7.11-8.13 of *On the Morals*, Coyle says,

At this point, Augustine begins to prepare for his referral to Scripture. If God is the highest good, his is also supreme Truth and Wisdom (§ 11), seeking to bring man to himself, as the continuity of salvation-history bears out (§ 12). This continuity is a thread that runs through both Testaments of the Bible ...³⁷⁵

Augustine traced this 'thread' of salvation-history, 'the path [God] has prepared for us', from the patriarchs through the law, to the prophets, to the incarnation, to the 'testimony of the Apostles', to the 'blood of the martyrs', to the 'conversion of the gentiles', to his present day.³⁷⁶ In *On the Morals* 35.77, he tells the Manichees that God has created a garden of salvation on earth to which 'there is an unfailing entrance known only to a few by which one can come in'.³⁷⁷ Implying into what one enters, Augustine simply continued his discussion of life in this 'abundant' garden as life 'in the Catholic church'.³⁷⁸

The idea that the church is comprised of all the faithful was among the most important of the key theological elements of the church's character which Augustine grasped during this period (esp. in contrast to the Manichaeans). He understood that

³⁷⁴ see ch. 5 for discussion of this and other aspects of *uera rel.* J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 342), comments on the fact that at Milan Augustine rejected the element in Manichaeism that there was 'secret gnosis reserved for the elect': 'Augustine's Christianity makes a distinction not between kinds of doctrine but between kinds of believers—those who have penetrated further have themselves changed, but they have been given no essential teaching that was withheld from them before'.

³⁷⁵ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 81.

³⁷⁶ *mor. ecc.* 7.12: *Quid potuit pro salute nostra fieri amplius? ... Uerae religionis fide praeceptisque seruatis non deseruerimus uiam quam nobis deus et patriarcharum segregatione et legis uinculo et prophetarum praesagio et suscepti hominis sacramento et apostolorum testimonio et martyrum sanguine et gentium occupatione muniuit.* CSEL 90. 14-15.

³⁷⁷ probably a specific reference to the cleansing union with Christ in baptism and the baptismal rites; cf. *mor. ecc.* 35.80; and Ambrose's *sacr.* 2.20; 2.23.

³⁷⁸ where people do not abuse physical things nor are bound to them, etc. *Quid ab opimi horti ubertate imperitos homines sepium asperitate terretis? Est certus aditus, quamuis paucioribus notus, qua possit intrari, quem uos aut esse non creditis, aut inuenire non uultis.* CSEL 90. 82.

the mode of life may be different between two persons or groups in the church without either being more or less spiritual, and that one's position was not a determinant of one's spirituality. Augustine especially attacked the idea that only lives of specific religious action in this world equate to or bring the truly blessed life. In *On the Morals* 35.77, he speaks of the many Catholics who do not use worldly goods at all: they are not necessarily better because of this than those others 'who use [things] as though not using them'. The latter have the Apostle Paul's sanction (*cf.* 1 Cor. 7.31) and have in the past proved their independence of the physical by renouncing in times of persecution 'all those vain and temporal goods which they used but were not enslaved to, thus proving to unbelievers that they possessed these goods and were not possessed by them'.³⁷⁹ In *On the Morals* 35.78, Augustine rejected the Manichee claim that it was incorrect for the baptized faithful to have children or to own property. He said,

Do not say that the catechumens are permitted to have wives, but not the faithful ... For there are many who use these things as though not using them. The renewal of a person, begun in the sacred bath of baptism, proceeds gradually and is accomplished more quickly in some individuals and more slowly in others, but many are in progress towards the new life if we consider the matter carefully and without prejudice (*mor. ecc.* 35.80)³⁸⁰

THE BROADER ECCLESIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The ideas concerning the church seen to emerge in Augustine's writings were not new. The presence of Augustine's earliest ideas of the church in the writings of Ambrose has been detailed above. Even more broadly, Augustine's ideas reflect those of the ecclesiological context of the latter fourth century.³⁸¹ Kelly comments on Augustine's ecclesiology that at its core 'Most of ... [its] points are commonplaces of fourth century Latin Catholicism'.³⁸² Among these later core, 'commonplace' ecclesiological elements are most of the ones which have been identified as Augustine's earliest. It is worth focusing on a couple of significant aspects of this general historical context of his early development.

³⁷⁹ *Sunt in ecclesia catholica innumerabiles fideles qui hoc mundo non utuntur, sunt qui utuntur tamquam non utentes, ut ab apostolo dicitur; et quod illis temporibus iam probatum est, quibus ad idolorum cultum Christiani cogeantur. Quot enim tunc pecuniosi homines ... utriusque sexus, haec omnia uana et temporalia relinquentes, quibus utique quamuis uterentur, non detinebantur, mortem pro salubri fide ac religione subierunt demonstraruntque infidelibus a se potius illa omnia quam se ab eis esse possessos.* CSEL 90. 82-83.

³⁸⁰ *Nolite iam dicere, catechumenis licere uti coniugibus, fidelibus autem non licere, catechumenis licere habere pecuniam, fidelibus autem non licere. Nam et multi sunt qui utuntur tamquam non utentes. Et illo sacrosancto lauacro inchoatur innouatio noui hominis, ut proficiendo perficiatur in aliis citius, in aliis tardius; a multis tamen proceditur in nouam uitam, si quisquam non inimice sed diligenter intendat.* CSEL 90. 86.

³⁸¹ for more general studies dealing with western ecclesiology relevant to the study of Augustine, the student is fortunate to have R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (1970), esp. 105-132; and particularly R.F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Theology* (1972).

³⁸² J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (51977), 402.

The idea of the church as Catholic goes back to primitive Christianity and the conception of early local Christian communities of being part of a universal church.³⁸³ More specifically, the idea of the church as Christ's (one) body came to underline the idea of one church, united in Christ but diffused through the entire world.³⁸⁴ The original idea of Catholic (*i.e.* 'universal' or 'general') quickly also came to include unity in fundamental belief.³⁸⁵ As argued above, Augustine's idea of the church as God's teacher on earth (or place of special teaching) may be derived in part from Ambrose. It is certainly also an idea congruent with contemporary ecclesiological understandings. Still, Augustine seems to have collected this idea from Ambrose's statements rather than adopting it out of familiarity with the general ecclesiological views in the church (as is also the case with the idea of asceticism as a universal aspect of the church).³⁸⁶

In J.C. Plumpe's study: *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in Early Christianity* (1943), he details the origins of this important phrase (giving as perhaps the earliest recorded Greek form the confessors of Lyon and Vienne in the latter half of the second century) and discusses its development.³⁸⁷ The explicit title 'mother church' is not found till three-quarters of the way through the second century; roughly the time of Tertullian's first usages.³⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Plumpe states that the doctrine of the church's motherhood was fully developed well before the close of the second century and gives Ambrose (*cf. de virg.* 1.13) as one example of the later popularity of this doctrine.³⁸⁹ Kelly cites Tertullian (*cf. de orat.* 2 and *c. Marc.* 5.48)³⁹⁰ and Cyprian to demonstrate the strength of the *mater ecclesia* concept in third century Africa.³⁹¹ Augustine's initial use of the phrase is probably due to Ambrose (though it is certainly possible that he was aware of it before coming to Milan

³⁸³ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (51977), 189.

³⁸⁴ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (51977), 189; *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1992), 259.

³⁸⁵ *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1992), 259.

³⁸⁶ for very recent argument that the ascetic movement generally is to be understood as 'ecclesial' see A. DeVogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique* v. 1 (1991), 69 and 79-80 (concurred with by J. Fontaine, 'Note Critique. Nouvelles Perspectives sur saint Jérôme et sur les origines du Monachisme Occidental', *Revue Mabillon* 4 (1993), esp. 292-293). Other ideas included the church having existed since the creation of the world (as the bride of Christ); present in Origen (*cf. cant.* 11.8) in addition to Ambrose. *Encyclopedia*, Di Berardino v. 1 (1992), 262. H.J. Vogt's article on 'Ecclesiology' (p. 259-262) in the *Encyclopedia* is an excellent summary of the understanding of the church up through Augustine.

³⁸⁷ J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia* (1943), 35f.

³⁸⁸ J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia* (1943), 13.

³⁸⁹ J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia* (1943), 7.

³⁹⁰ see also R.F. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 9.

³⁹¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (51977), 200, 206.

and that Ambrose only sparked interest in the concept).³⁹² Jerome's *ep.* 22.13 is another example of a use of the phrase that Augustine probably read at Rome in 387/388.³⁹³ Thus, Augustine's early ecclesiological knowledge is congruent with the broader ecclesiological context of the later fourth century. Yet, it does not appear that such knowledge was derived from the broader context (*e.g.* from wide reading of Christian material on the subject). As would continue to be the case up through 391 (and perhaps beyond), Augustine's ecclesial understanding was sparked by others but was developed quite internally.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that Augustine's conception of the church does advance significantly in the period at Milan and Rome immediately following his baptism. The events and *disciplina* (general Christian instruction, including *doctrina*)³⁹⁴ to which he was exposed in the context of Christian initiation played an important part in sparking his ecclesiological thought. He began to think of the church above all as the teacher, the primary bastion of Christian [*i.e.* God's] authority on earth, holding the criteria of truth. This conception conformed with Augustine's intellectual program of the time and became the framework for his first (though certainly unofficial) 'role' in the universal church – his actions as a Catholic defender/teacher, independent of but in allegiance to the hierarchy of the Catholic church. In line with his own understanding of the ideal life of thought and practice in the Christian pursuit of 'true philosophy', Augustine was also brought closer to the church by his development in the area of religious practice. Most importantly, he was influenced by, but not converted to, 'established' monastic and ascetic communities at Milan and Rome.

The church was also important in his theological/philosophical understanding of the life of devotion to God, which he as a baptized believer was to pursue. It had bestowed Christ's cleansing authority on him. Its 'learned' members were his greatest model for emulation (in the spiritual life). Furthermore, its devoted members – the world over – were his constant encouragement, reminder (even goad)³⁹⁵ to live (as Ambrose had urged the neophytes) the life of humility, continence, and spiritual devotion that would bring him to God and spiritual understanding. The church was the

³⁹² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 395-396 (which gives references to other works on this subject in Augustine) and 400f. Coyle also notes (p. 396) that the 'first instance we have of the theme of *mater ecclesia* [at Rome] is in the *Epigrammata* of Pope Damasus' (died 384) indicating that while not very popular when Augustine visited there, this phrase was certainly known at Rome; *cf.* also J.C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia* (1943), 128f.

³⁹³ *cf.* J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 214, for dating of the epistle.

³⁹⁴ see Appendix B, p. 300-302, for further discussion of *doctrina* and *disciplina*.

³⁹⁵ *cf. conf.* 8.7.16 and the question/outburst to Alypius in *conf.* 8.8.19.

door to spiritual communion, the bastion of God's saving truth, the home of sound doctrine. As such, it provided the framework or Christian background against which Augustine could pursue his spiritual life of devotion to God and relate to the rest of the general Christian communion. Since the primary focus of his baptism had been his own regenerating identification with Christ, the primary focus of his early Christian life remained his own relationship to God. Yet, the love of God left no option for withdrawing entirely from the general Christian community, for Augustine was constrained by love to share his increasing, spiritual understanding in the church and for its benefit.³⁹⁶ Recalling the two-fold view of humanity in the *Dialogues*,³⁹⁷ the idea is reinforced that it was Augustine's experience at Milan that gave him a reason for relating to the ones he so looked down on at Cassiciacum. The view of those who were as yet unable to understand and/or were uneducated appears the same in both cases,³⁹⁸ but his relation to them is different. At Cassiciacum, his action was to teach those who could possibly understand (*e.g.* Romanianus, Alypius, his students in the liberal arts – Trygetius and Licentius, and others) while maintaining a basically hopeless view of the ignorant. After Milan, he endeavored to teach as before *and* to protect those ones less able to grasp the spiritual reality of the truth in which they believed. This development likely derives from experiences and input at Milan from Ambrose and the instruction surrounding baptism.³⁹⁹

Still, the primacy of the spiritual world over the physical, and the love of God over all things meant that in Augustine's understanding of 387-388 he ought to focus firstly on his spiritual life – something which required a certain aloofness from the general Christian community.⁴⁰⁰ Following his baptism, though he often refers to 'Christian writings' or Christian 'learned men' with which he was familiar and benefiting from, he does not seem to have felt dependent on the institutional church for instruction or guidance.⁴⁰¹ Still, he seems to have recognized that the institutional church served the

³⁹⁶ esp. the benefit of those in the universal church who were able to grasp incorporeal reality.

³⁹⁷ cf. ch. 1, 22-25.

³⁹⁸ *i.e.* he considered such ones as ignorant and as ones for whom he must apologize; cf. *mor. ecc.* 10.16 *ad fin.*; 10.17; and esp. 34.75.

³⁹⁹ for those who can understand, explanation and instruction suffices, but for those who cannot (or cannot yet), protection is also necessary. In the writings before Milan, explanations and instructions toward spiritual understanding abound. Only after Milan is protective instruction and defense found in Augustine's writings, and it has already been noted that in his discussions Ambrose advocated this protection as a role for some in the church; see above, p. 107-109 and esp. *exam.* 3.14.59.

⁴⁰⁰ which is not to say that it required existence outside of a communal environment. Rather, Augustine pursued this focus in community with a small number of like-minded and able persons (in this case his traveling companions). The negative side of the general community in the church was that many in it were unable to grasp or did not see the point in seeking spiritual understanding. In *quant* 33.73, Augustine said, 'tranquillity is absolutely necessary for the study of matters shrouded in mystery' (*quo tranquillitas propter ... inuestigandis obscurissimis rebus pernecessaria*. CSEL 89. 221); cf. also J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 340-341.

⁴⁰¹ he may have remained attached in practice to corporate worship.

continued needs, especially of protection and instruction, of many Catholic Christians (even the majority). The church, both institutional and universal, offered: a framework for his activity as a spiritual teacher (he began with its knowledge and authority then moved toward spiritual understanding in agreement with its doctrine); the teaching which protected those who could not understand (and which he should defend); a place for him to encourage all to go for entrance into the spiritual life; and innumerable examples throughout the world (and taking various forms) of a life lived in devotion to and contemplation of God – *i.e.* an ascetic life motivated by love for God. The influence of Catholic asceticism was especially important, because, although Augustine was not going to join an ‘official’ (or established) ascetic community,⁴⁰² from this point on he will be seen to incorporate various ascetic elements into his own Christian communities and understanding of the church. Moreover, this universal element of the church confirmed its authority and teaching.⁴⁰³ The ascetic dimension of the church also seems to have met a theological/spiritual necessity. For Augustine, being a Catholic Christian, being baptized, or being able to grasp the idea(s) of incorporeal reality did not ensure the achievement of spiritual understanding. It was also necessary, and as important, to be worthy (in moral or religious terms of purity) to understand what one believed.⁴⁰⁴

The above investigation seems to confirm that Augustine’s new ideas of the church, as well as the use of the church in his discussions and explanations of Christian life and thought, were sparked by the stay at Milan in 387. There, Augustine breathed an ecclesiological atmosphere created by the liturgical and congregational context surrounding his baptism and by the discourses of Ambrose. The atmosphere at Milan emphasized all the ecclesial elements which Augustine put forward concerning the church during the period between Milan and Thagaste. Yet, Augustine did not stop with the information about the church that he received from Ambrose (or others in Milan and Rome), he pushed it forward. He absorbed it into his own understanding of the Christian life (its goals, processes, and meaning). For him, the church was the primary bastion of Christian authority, the interpreter of scriptures, the ‘mother of all

⁴⁰² essentially, what later was called a ‘monastery’.

⁴⁰³ perfection of moral conduct was a general characteristic of all ascetics; *mor. ecc.* 28.56 *ad fin.* See also J.K. Coyle, *Augustine’s De Moribus* (1978), 152-153, where in describing Augustine’s use of the church as an authority which confirms scripture, he continues: ‘In turn, the proof of the Church’s credibility lies in such phenomena as her rapid territorial expansion and large numbers of faithful (lines 985-988, 994-998, 1264), in her martyrs (line 273), in the large numbers of her faithful who practice the evangelical counsels to the full (lines 1072-1075, 1084-1087, 1159-1170, 1290-1299), in her continuity through history (lines 209-212), but above all in her apostolic tradition (lines 1219-1222; cf. also 211, 273, and 1245). ... The implication is, of course, that the Manichaean “Church” can point to none of these signs of credibility in herself’.

⁴⁰⁴ *e.g. mor. ecc.* 20.37.

true Christians', and finally, God's teacher instructing people on how to approach him and live in his presence.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁵ it must be noted that the drive for special service to God was probably also tied to fulfilling what he had failed to accomplish with the Manichees (*i.e.* the complete devotion to God of the elect). Throughout many sections of my work I have been aware of the Manichaean backdrop or undercurrent to some of Augustine's developments relative to the church and I am indebted to D.F. Wright for drawing my attention back to this aspect. Yet it is difficult, even in Africa, where we know the most about Manichaeism, to identify its structures or community life in detail (*cf.* F. Decret, *Aspects du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine* (1970) and *L'Afrique manichéenne (IV^e-V^e siècles)* v. 1-2 (1978), provides the most comprehensive discussions on the Manichees in Africa). Decret's recent article, 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manichaeorum Livre II – De Moribus Manichaeorum', in J.K. Coyle, *et al.*, «*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*» «*De quantitate animae*» di AGOSTINO D'IPPONA (1991), 59-119 (esp. 108f.), highlights the significance of *mor. Man.* for understanding some aspects of the communal and hierarchical nature of the Manichees but also reinforces the limited evidence available. Our record of the Manichees is much more about a system of ideas and practices than a record of practicing communities or organizational institutions. It is certainly the case that the idea of a religious community which had certain members who could 'advance' higher than others may have supported Augustine's early two-fold view of the spiritual and the ignorant in the Catholic church (though O'Donnell is quite right to note Augustine's rejection of the Manichaean form of communal hierarchy or the rational behind it; see *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 342).

CHAPTER FOUR

ECCLESIOLOGICAL FOCUS AND PROGRESS AT THAGASTE (388 THROUGH 389)

INTRODUCTION

Augustine returned to North Africa from Italy in the course of mid to late August or early September 388.¹ His *City of God*² records that he arrived first, and stayed briefly, in Carthage before moving on to his home town of Thagaste in Numidia.³ At Carthage he stayed with a devout Christian named Innocentius who had been advocate to the deputy prefecture.⁴ Augustine was welcomed as a devout Christian (*seruus dei*) in Innocentius' house where he also met officials (*sancti uiri*) from the church in Carthage.⁵ Nebridius, one of Augustine's friends who also returned from Italy, decided to stay in Carthage with family and doubtless encouraged Augustine to stay with him (*cf. ep. 5*). However, Bonner is surely right that the memories of Carthage were for Augustine 'more painful than pleasant' and that he looked forward to leaving for Thagaste.⁶ Thus, by the autumn of 388, Augustine had returned to his hometown of Thagaste and established a sort of religious community⁷ in line with his understanding of a life lived, with others, in the service and pursuit of God.

When Augustine left for Rome to further his career almost five years earlier, he was a half-hearted Manichee increasingly attracted by skepticism. He left Carthage in

¹ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 147, who traces the 'voyage' from Rome to Carthage to Thagaste (p. 147-149), indicates the 'first half of August' as the most likely time of return, but gives the general period of August/September as possible (p. 431). In *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 106 and n. 1, G. Bonner suggests the return was immediately after the 28th of August (*i.e.* after the defeat and execution of Maximus) and also lists the views of a number of other scholars (almost all favor August).

² *ciu.* 22.8 (CCL 48.2. 816 line 48).

³ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432-435.

⁴ *ciu.* 22.8 (CCL 48.2. 816 ln. 45-51).

⁵ including Saturninus – bishop of Usala, Gulosus – priest at Carthage, and other deacons from the church, among whom was Aurelius, the future bishop of Carthage (CCL 48.2. 817 ln. 97-102). These ecclesiastical figures were praying for and encouraging Innocentius on account of a fistula that required a serious operation (see the full story in *ciu.* 22.8 (CCL 48.2. 816-818 ln. 45-135), for account of how the problem was dramatically healed by prayer).

⁶ G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 106.

⁷ G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 533-534.

late 383 unable to conceive of the spiritual as distinct from the material.⁸ However, in Milan he had been exposed to neo-Platonic philosophy and the learned Christianity typified by bishop Ambrose (whose spiritual Christianity is now known to have incorporated neo-Platonic insights). The two years spent in Italy following his conversion of August 386 – first in philosophic retreat at Cassiciacum, then in preparation for baptism and entrance into the Catholic church in Milan, and finally in residence at Rome⁹ – saw the first-fruits of Augustine's attempt to integrate these two strains of his new life. Consequently, in 388, Augustine returned to Africa as a Catholic Christian committed to the spiritual life and to the service of God. He returned committed to the spiritual truth of Christianity as presented in the Christian scriptures and maintained (and explained) in the teaching of the Catholic church.

The emergence of new ecclesiological ideas, such as the church as universal teacher and also mother of all Catholic Christians, marks Augustine's treatises deriving from the period between his baptism and his arrival in Thagaste.¹⁰ In them, the idea of the church as teacher, Augustine's primary early ecclesial association, is particularly emphasized. The stay at Milan in 387 for baptism, between Cassiciacum and Rome, had stimulated the emergence of Augustine's ecclesiological ideas. Following this, his philosophical speculation (especially concerning the soul) continued, such as in *The Greatness of the Soul*, but it possessed a new clarity in its religious digressions and Christian elements. Among these elements was the 'church', and one example of this new clarity can be seen in his presentation of the philosophic pursuit within the framework of Christianity, a framework created by the church:

if we hold most constantly [to] the course which God enjoins on us and which we have undertaken to keep, we will eventually come by God's power and wisdom to that highest cause, or highest author, or highest principle of all things ... [and] when we have understood this, we will see truly ... Then we will perceive how true are those things which we have been commanded to believe, and how perfect has been our nourishment within [our] mother church (*quant.* 33.76).¹¹

Such Christian framing is also found in the Roman portion of *On Free Will*.¹²

⁸ coming from the (prevalent) western tradition of the Stoics and Tertullian, who held that what was real was bodily, meaning that spirit was a very subtle form of matter. See R.J. Teske, *St. Augustine on Genesis*, FC 84 (1991), 12.

⁹ having been delayed from returning to Africa on account of his mother's death at Ostia and the blockade of the usurper Maximus.

¹⁰ as was demonstrated in ch. 2 and 3.

¹¹ *Illud plane nunc ego audeo tibi dicere, nos si cursum, quem nobis deus imperat et quem tenendum suscepimus, constantissime tenuerimus, peruenturos per uirtutem dei atque sapientiam ad summam illam causam uel summum auctorem uel summum principium rerum omnium ... quo intellecto uere uidebimus, ... Tunc agnoscemus, quam uera nobis credenda imperata sint quamque optime ac saluberrime apud matrem ecclesiam.* CSEL 89. 223-224.

¹² e.g. *lib. arb.* 1.3.6; 2.2.6; 2.15.39. The Roman portion of *lib. arb.* certainly includes book one and may extend up to 2.16.43, cf. E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 11. However, W.M.

Augustine's post-Cassiciacum Italian writings also reveal increasing familiarity with Christian doctrines and practice. However, in contrast to the Cassiciacum writings, in which Augustine associated his Christian ideas with scripture and his own reasoning upon it, later in Italy he described his Christian beliefs as 'the divine teaching ... handed over (only) in the Catholic church' (*quant.* 34.77),¹³ teaching commensurate with scripture.¹⁴

The same period also witnessed the emergence of an entirely new type of literary endeavor for Augustine – that of Catholic polemical writings – which addressed Christian topics specifically. Augustine's Roman draft of *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*¹⁵ set out to answer Manichee objections to Catholic Christianity and to defend Catholic teaching and lifestyle.¹⁶ Thus, there was clear development in Augustine's understanding and discussion of the church during his Italian sojourn, from Cassiciacum (where the church is not mentioned at all) to Rome (where Augustine referred a great deal to the church, its members, and its teaching). In light of these developments it would appear that Brown is correct in his assertion that:

Thagaste could never be another Cassiciacum. Even during his stay in Rome, Augustine's writings show a new determination. From that time onwards, he intended to live a secluded life no longer, as in Milan, on the fringe of a society of intellectual laymen, but directly in the shadow of the organized life of the Catholic Church.¹⁷

Indeed, Augustine had changed significantly from the Christian philosophical writer of Cassiciacum. He was still oriented first toward his individual pilgrimage to God and spiritual understanding, rather than primarily toward the Christian community or organized church. Yet, for Augustine in 388, these did not constitute different directions but ordered priorities in the same direction. As he arrived back in Africa, he was coming to be affected by different aspects of the organized church and broader Catholic communities, and he increasingly sought to construct his life in concert with these ecclesial impulses while at Thagaste.¹⁸

Green, in *CCL* 29. 207, writes, 'it may be conjectured that the first book and a half were written in Rome, while the memory of the conversation [or conversations with Evodius which form the basis of this dialogue] were still fresh, and the remainder completed in Africa'.

¹³ *Ideoque diuine ac singulariter in ecclesia catholica traditur nullam creaturam colendam esse animae.* *CSEL* 89. 225.

¹⁴ see also *quant.* 34.77, 78 and *mor. ecc.* 7.11; 28.55, 56.

¹⁵ cf. Table 4 below, p. 136-137.

¹⁶ *mor. ecc.* 1.2; J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 80.

¹⁷ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 132. Though I would want to clarify that 'Milan' here refers to the period before not after Cassiciacum and that an element of seclusion within a smaller Christian community was retained as Augustine remained in the 'shadow' of organized church life.

¹⁸ as indicated, Brown notes that Augustine was now 'in the shadow of the organized life of the Catholic church'; that is, identified under and in allegiance to its authority and institutions but still living outside its organized institutions and not in frequent contact with the mass of its members.

As mentioned, the ecclesial understanding with which Augustine returned to North Africa focused on the concept of the church as teacher. The idea of the church as the locus of divine teaching, the primary association in his proto-ecclesiological thought, was emphasized in his adoption of the role of Catholic teacher/defender in *On the Morals*.¹⁹ Indeed, the beginning of Augustine's affinity for the role of Catholic defender/teacher in this work provides the first hint of the possibility of his future adoption of such a position. In 388/389, however, this role did not resolve into a clear relationship with or position in the organized church. In ecclesial terms, he was writing for the church, for the protection of its easily deceived ones, and to convert the Manichees to the Catholic church. Yet, he did not acknowledge himself anywhere as a 'teacher of the church'. Moreover, he gave indication that he did not want to associate directly or regularly with the more ignorant Catholic masses. There is no direct evidence for his regular involvement (or even presence) in the Catholic congregation at Rome. These aspects of his Christian life, namely, awareness and commitment to the Catholic church combined with a certain remove from its organized or common manifestations, would continue at Thagaste.

Augustine had also encountered the church in Italy in aspects of life besides teaching. His continued and developing religious practice in Milan and Rome, while it cannot be explicitly connected to any ecclesial structures, reveals an understanding that Christian teaching properly leads toward a religious lifestyle of spiritual contemplation and asceticism. This is seen, for example, in his statements which indicate purity as a condition for understanding.²⁰ The 'manner of life through which we attain (merit?) knowledge of what we believe' (*mor. ecc.* 20.37)²¹ comprised Augustine's practical focus. Moreover, such a life was an endeavor shared by all the faithful in the Catholic communion, united in charity. In this connection, Augustine had begun to be influenced by the growing, western ascetic/'monastic' movement, which he had encountered and learned about at Milan and Rome – and elements from which he applied later at Thagaste. Finally, Augustine's theological thinking on the church was illustrated at Rome as he began to praise the church as *Catholic* (a term increasingly meaningful to him, *i.e.* understood and defined) and as *mother* (the institution, visible and invisible, which mediated salvation to all Christians and nourished her charges to yield growth where possible and otherwise protection). His theological thought on the church began at Rome and certainly continued at Thagaste. Being thus equipped in his

¹⁹ or in Africa in *mor. Man.* or *Gn. a. Man.*

²⁰ *e.g. quant.* 34.78.

²¹ *Non enim nunc de fide sed de uita dicere institui, per quam meremur scire quod credimus. CSEL 90. 42; cf. mor. ecc. 1.1: Et diligentia igitur et pietas adhibenda est; altero fiet ut scientes inueniamus; altero ut scire mereamur. CSEL 90. 4.*

understanding of the church Augustine returned to North Africa in 388. As he settled for what would be a period of approximately two and a half years back in his home town, Augustine had achieved his immediate goal, to return to Africa and live there in the service of God with a small circle of like-minded friends and family.²² Already he was in the 'shadow of the Catholic church' (to use Brown's phrase) and committed to being there. Over the course of the Thagaste period, his ecclesial orbit would tighten and his understanding and appreciation of the church would coalesce to prompt more direct involvement at an organizational and responsible level.

THESIS: ECCLESIAL PROGRESS AT THAGASTE THROUGH 389

Augustine's ecclesiology which eventually emerged at Thagaste was essentially continuous with his proto-ecclesiology observed at Rome. However, his thoughts about the church during his first years at Thagaste extended in several new directions. In Thagaste, Augustine was finally in a position to work out the implications of the shift towards the church in his Christian understanding that followed his baptism (and exposure to various Italian ecclesial influences) and begin to implement his conclusions. Following his baptism in Milan, he had begun to think about the church – especially as God's teacher. This idea surrounded and pervaded most of his references to the church during that time, but other elements grew up alongside this one at Thagaste; it became one part of a broadening view of the church.

Augustine's Christian philosophic speculation and his thought on the practice of the religious life coalesced into more cohesive structures and conceptualizations at Thagaste. Structurally, Augustine settled with a few friends and family members in his home town, presumably on his parents' estate.²³ There he attempted to live in a community that embodied and facilitated the elements of Christian life which he saw as most important. Specifically, he sought to incorporate philosophic and scholarly, as well as ascetic and 'monastic', elements into the unique Christian community.²⁴ Conceptually, one of the most significant developments was the attention to the church

²² cf. *conf.* 9.8.17.

²³ though he seems to have given up his rights to the estate and have sold his worldly possessions. Possidius, *uita Aug. 3: Ac placuit ei percepta gratia cum aliis ciuibus et amicis suis Deo pariter seruientibus ad Africam et propriam domum agrosque remeare. Ad quos ueniens, et in quibus constitutus ferme triennio, et a se iam alienatis, cum his qui eidem adhaerebant Deo uiuebat, ieiuniis, orationibus, bonis operibus, in lege Domini meditans die ac nocte.* Latin from the text and translation of H.J. Weiskotten, *Sancti Augustini Vita scripta a Possidio episcopo* (1919), 44; cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 107; and also p. 153 n. 134, below.

²⁴ see G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 108, where he says the community was 'inspired by the ideals of monasticism', yet, 'was not a monastery in the strict sense of the word, but was partly monastic and partly a society for study—one might almost say a religious college'.

as an object of theological speculation.²⁵ Out of this attention, ecclesiological themes such as: the wheat and the tares, the church in history and the world, the church as ascetic and yet related to the secular world around it, and the church as the body of Christ all made their appearance for the first time during this period. Other (previous) ecclesial ideas like those of the mother church and the church Catholic were extended.²⁶ In addition, Augustine's Christian teaching moved from being primarily defensive and polemical to what is more recognizably theological (and positive) – important elements of which touched on ecclesiology.²⁷ Writing at Rome he had arrested himself in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 15.22 saying, 'O deep mysteries! But I refrain; *for I have not undertaken to instruct you [Manichees] in the truth*, but, if I am able, to help you unlearn perverse views' (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 19.35).²⁸ At Thagaste, however, he would undertake a whole treatise on Genesis which presumed to instruct the uneducated within the Catholic community as well as the Manichaeans.²⁹ At the same time, his philosophical discussions evidence a much more refined incorporation of distinctively Christian elements and illustrate his continued serious pursuit of an integration of neo-Platonic insights into Christianity.

There has been considerable discussion in recent years over the nature of Augustine's community at Thagaste and whether it constituted a monastery.³⁰ This topic will be dealt with fully in due course, but it is necessary to indicate the general perspective from which this chapter will proceed. By the end of his time in Thagaste, Augustine had, as a result of his early ecclesiological coalescence, reached a 'monastic' position (though the result of this achievement took quite a different turn than he himself expected). However, this position was *achieved* at Thagaste. Brown is essentially correct in his assertion that, 'It is unlikely that ... [Augustine] ... thought of "founding" a "monastery" immediately on his arrival in Thagaste;³¹ the old forms of a life of scholarly retirement, reinforced by his ecclesiastical status as a *seruus Dei*,

²⁵ previously, references to the church focused on its actions and assigned to it certain foundational characteristics (e.g. mother of all Christians) to lend authority to argument, but in his writings from Thagaste the church began to be discussed theologically in its own right.

²⁶ a number of these elements are seen or culminated (for Thagaste) in Augustine's *uera rel.* (c. 390/391); this chapter will confine itself to the development of 388-389, leaving 390-391 to chapter five.

²⁷ cf. his explanation of the church and Christ in connection with the ages of biblical history in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.35-41; see below, p. 164f. (esp. 168-170).

²⁸ *O alta mysteria. Sed reprimam me; non enim modo suscepi docere uos recta sed dedocere praua, si potero, id est, si deus annuerit proposito in uos meo.* CSEL 90. 40.

²⁹ *Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2; cf. R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 7.

³⁰ see esp. G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45-58; cf. below, p. 172-173, for other scholars.

³¹ for discussion of the often supposed 'monastic' nature of the Thagaste community, see the excursus below p. 172f.

probably seemed sufficient'.³² The years 388 and 389 saw the arrival of Augustine back in Africa in a state of considerable Christian (and ecclesial) stimulation, the precipitation of various of the ecclesial ideas during progress along various lines of contemplation and religious activity (e.g. the study of scripture), and the (clear) emergence from this of those elements which would be consolidated in 390/391 in a first coherent ecclesiology.³³ Therefore, this chapter investigates Augustine's 'ecclesiastical status' and his ecclesiological development during his first two years in Thagaste (up through 389).

TEXTS AND CHRONOLOGY

The principal sources employed in this chapter are the works written by Augustine at Thagaste from 388 through 389. Yet, the separation of Augustine's Thagaste works into two groups (roughly those from before and after the beginning of 390) is not simple. Moreover, in determining the sequence of these works, there is a slight departure from the sequence in Augustine's *Review*.³⁴ The *Review* tends to list works by date of inception, and a number of the works Augustine began in Rome were completed only in Africa. Still, it does seem possible to identify a group of works which were under production almost from the earliest days at Thagaste (e.g. *Gn. a. Man.* and *mor. Man.*, and possibly *mag.*), others which are clearly from the later Thagaste years (e.g. *uera rel.*), and still others which received Augustine's attention periodically between 388 and 391 (e.g. *lib. arb.*, *mus.*, and *diu. qu.*). The following chronology (in order of publication) has been determined for 388 through 389:

Table 4: Augustine's writings at Thagaste, Part One (388 through 389)³⁵

Works	Probable:	Writing Period	Publication ³⁶
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i>		388-389	early 389-390
<i>mor. ecc.</i>	(1.1, 13.22-14.24, 16.26-18.34, 31.65 <i>ad fin.</i>) ³⁷	388-389	early 389
<i>mor. Man.</i>		388-389	early 389

³² P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 136. To which could be added the examples of different kinds of asceticism and ascetic communities of which Augustine had become aware in Rome and elsewhere. For discussion of the idea of *serui dei* see below, p. 175f.

³³ ch. 5 will follow this development up to Augustine's journey to Hippo in 391, a journey which was probably in part the result of the emergence of his first comprehensive ecclesial understanding.

³⁴ as indicated in ch. 3 (see esp. Table 2), Augustine's exact literary activity at Rome is difficult to establish. A number of works begun there were completed in Africa.

³⁵ see Appendix A, Table 6 for a list of the probable (and different) order of the inception of these writings.

³⁶ derived principally from O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432-435; and J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 332-335.

³⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 75-76.

Works	Probable:	Writing Period	Publication
<i>diu. qu.</i>	(1–24) ³⁸	388–389/390	c. 396
<i>mag.</i> ³⁹		389	389
<i>lib. arb.</i>	(possibly bk. 2, up through 2.16.43)	388	395/396

FROM THE CHURCH AS TEACHER TO TEACHING IN THE CHURCH

The conception of the church as teacher remains prominent in Augustine's writings from Thagaste.⁴⁰ The basis of this idea is the belief that the church is the primary bastion of God's authority on earth. The tradition of the church (direct from the Apostles), its extension, its teaching, and its fruit (largely defined in ascetic and philosophical terms) all underlie its authority.⁴¹ Most importantly, the church is considered to have unique claim to scripture,⁴² 'that authority which is most dear to us' (*mag.* 5.14).⁴³ The Catholic church, in contrast to the Manichees for example, holds

³⁸ a full treatment of the dating complexities surrounding *diu. qu.* is beyond the scope of this thesis since 'questions' were still being dealt with well after Augustine arrived in Hippo in 391. The actual collation of the different questions did not take place until after Augustine was bishop. Indeed, out of caution I will base little by way of argument on this collection. D.L. Mosher has provided a helpful treatment in English of the chronological issues in *FC* 70 (1982), 2–20 – based largely on the arguments of Bardy (*BA* 10 (1952), 11–50). Mosher feels that 'the groupings of the various questions was not arbitrary, but chronological' (p. 13) and his arguments for which questions are to be assigned to which dates come from pages 10–13 (esp. 13 n. 39) and 14–20. He identifies questions 1–8, 10, 13, 15, 21–22, and 24 as a group which may be placed in 388–389 (p. 14–15); another group (questions 14, 16, 18, and 23) is also assigned to this period (p. 15–16). The group of questions 9, 11, 12, 17, 19, and 20 come from 388–391 (p. 20), and numbers 25–50 are from 391 (p. 20 – Mosher admits that this would imply more effort on *diu. qu.* in 391, after the arrival in Hippo, than at any other point; a conclusion which may be suspect given Augustine's period of retired study granted by Valerius, cf. *ep.* 21). All the other questions (51–83) are assigned variously to different periods from 391–395/396 – outside the period considered in this thesis.

³⁹ this treatise is the last of Augustine's works to be written in dialogue form and is based on conversations with Adeodatus (cf. *conf.* 9.6.14). Chadwick (*Confessions* (1991), 164 n. 19) places Adeodatus' death around April 389, two years after his baptism, 'not long after the discussions written up by Augustine in *The Teacher*'. Other dates, with comments, are given by Bonner in *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 108 n. 6 (e.g. F. van der Meer, c. 390; Marrou, 389). Bardy's contention that the dialogue itself may have taken place at Cassiciacum is certainly possible, but I see no compelling reason to remove it from the period of composition and publication, which was in Africa (Bonner, 108). Although more recently, Bonner has identified the 'conversation with Adeodatus' as having taken place 'while at Rome'; 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534). A survey of significant Christian, ecclesial, and philosophic terms, traced in Augustine's works from 386–391 (see Appendix B), does not illuminate the situation. Both *mag.* and *lib. arb.* are largely lacking these terms (in part due to subject matter), and the frequency of such terms as 'ecclesia', 'pater', 'amor', 'c(h)aritas', and 'philosophia' and would suggest different periods for this 'dialogue', see Appendix B, Tables 8, 14, 15, 17.

⁴⁰ esp. in *mor. ecc.* and *Gn. a. Man.*

⁴¹ see *mor. ecc.* 33.72; 31.65; 35.77; 31.65–33.73; cf. *diu. qu.* 36.1 *ad fin.* and 36.2 *ad fin.*

⁴² in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.2.3 the criterion of interpretation of the biblical text is to understand the passages while 'avoiding blasphemies' and providing an explanation which is complete and in harmony with the Catholic doctrine; cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.17.28.

⁴³ *Aug. Ergo, ut ea potissimum auctoritate utamur, quae nobis carissima est.* CCL 29. 172; cf. *mor. Man.* 5.15 *ad fin.*; 17.55.

to the whole of God's word, for it embraces both testaments.⁴⁴ The learned ones (teachers) of the Catholic church are those who correctly understand and interpret scripture: 'They understand the scriptures following the apostolic teaching, not following that arrogant and false name "Apostle" [*i.e.* Mani]' (*mor. ecc.* 33.72).⁴⁵ The teaching of these learned men, the Catholic church's teaching, which is properly based on scripture and on an understanding of the transcendent, immaterial world – whose principal object is God,⁴⁶ is presented as *the* authority on earth.⁴⁷

Augustine's high view of the church's teaching is also seen in *On Manichaean Morals*. For example, he based his discussion of the problem of evil on 'what is said in the Catholic church'.⁴⁸ In explaining this problem to the Manichees, Augustine was simply showing 'how easily the problem is solved from the perspective of Catholic teaching' (*mor. Man.* 4.6).⁴⁹ His presentation of the essence of evil is described as the Catholic view of the subject (which 'holds the truth', *mor. Man.* 6.8).⁵⁰ Later in this work, Augustine responded to Manichaean derision of Catholic asceticism. In so doing he acted as a defender against charges resulting from 'ignorance [and misunderstanding] of Catholic teaching' (*mor. Man.* 11.28).⁵¹ Such passages clearly illustrate Augustine's continued emphasis on and connection between teaching and the church.

In addition to such deference to and practical use of Catholic *disciplina*, Augustine focused on it from a personal and contemplative side as well. He declared that the 'happy life is not to be found ... anywhere save in Catholic teaching' (*mor. ecc.* 18.33).⁵² If the Manichees understood Catholic teaching, they would 'without delay abandon all their vain corporeal imaginings and the absurdities of their fables, and with great eagerness, with sincere love, and with the most firm faith would plunge [themselves] into the very bosom (heart) of the Catholic church' (*mor. ecc.* 17.32).⁵³

⁴⁴ *mor. ecc.* 16.27-29; 18.34; cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2 and *passim*.

⁴⁵ *intelligunt scripturas secundum apostolicam disciplinam, non secundum superbum et commentitium nomen apostoli.* CSEL 90. 77-78; cf. also *mor. ecc.* 1.1 and 10.16.

⁴⁶ *Gn. a. Man.* 1.17.28, cf. 1.16.26 *ad fin.*

⁴⁷ *Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.2 *ad fin.*

⁴⁸ *i.e.* 'that God is the maker of all natures and substances', *mor. Man.* 2.3 (*Quodcirca cum in catholica dicitur omnium naturarum atque substantiarum esse auctorem deum.* CSEL 90. 90).

⁴⁹ *Quamobrem cum uos expedire nequeatis, uidete quam expedita sit sententia catholicae disciplinae.* CSEL 90. 92.

⁵⁰ *Quid ergo hinc lux catholica dicit? Quid putatis, nisi id quod ueritas habet.* CSEL 90. 93.

⁵¹ *Temere id quidem propter imperitiam catholicae disciplinae.* CSEL 90. 112.

⁵² *nihil est aliud nisi beatissime uiuere neque esse uspiam nisi in catholica disciplina.* CSEL 90. 38.

⁵³ *Confestim abiceretis omnes ineptias fabellarum et uanissimas imaginationes corporum totosque uos magna alacritate, sincero amore, firmissima fide sanctissimo ecclesiae catholicae gremio conderetis.* CSEL 90. 37. The implication is that all true Catholic Christians have done (or should do) the same.

He presented Catholic doctrine⁵⁴ as the basis of security, especially for those unable to defend themselves from falsehood by reason⁵⁵ – the majority of Catholic believers.⁵⁶

Furthermore, Augustine's idealization of the role of Catholic teacher continued and he increasingly adopted this role. In *On Genesis against the Manichaeans*, he specifically focused on teaching those who were of slower mind in the Catholic communion (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2). The beginnings of his 83 *Questions* during this time showed his general concern to educate those in his community (cf. *diu. qu.* 1-24). Towards the end of *On the Morals*, Augustine admired the 'patres' of the ascetic groups he had witnessed at Rome for their holiness and great knowledge of divine doctrine.⁵⁷ In this same work, he exhorted his readers:

I implore you, be a little attentive, and see the harmony between both Testaments; which teach and make fully apparent what the manner of our moral life should be and what [end] all things ought be referred to ... The salvation of the soul and the way to happiness is pointed out in the peace between both parts of scripture, and yet you are more desirous to bark against these things than to obey them. Let me tell you briefly *what I think*: Listen to the *learned men of the Catholic church* (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 18.34).⁵⁸

Augustine emphasized not only the learning of the Catholics teachers in such a statement but also virtually identified himself with them. In a sense, this is not surprising since Augustine had already assumed the role of a Catholic teacher/defender

⁵⁴ in all these texts on 'teaching' the continued dominance of 'disciplina' over 'doctrina' is notable (cf. ch. 3 n. 82). The sense communicated in this seems to underline Augustine's commitment to the integration of spiritual understanding with life (see Appendix B, p. 300-302 (esp. n. 104 and 108)).

⁵⁵ *mor. ecc.* 34.75-76.

⁵⁶ in *mor. ecc.* 34.75, Augustine identified those who were ignorant though within the 'true religion' as a considerable number of the Catholic believers (*Nolite consecrari turbas imperitorum, qui uel in ipsa uera religione superstitiosi sunt uel ita libidinibus dediti, ut obliti sint quid promiserint deo.* CSEL 90. 80). He associated this 'throng of the ignorant' with two problems: 1. they are superstitious (*i.e.* they do not understand the faith they profess) or 2. they are 'sensual' and have 'forgotten what they promised to God' (*i.e.* they do not manifest the faith they profess). The resultant dangers which may follow from such states were represented by: the many 'worshippers of tombs and pictures' (*multos esse sepulcrorum et picturarum adoratores*); those who drink excessively over the dead (martyrs); those who excuse drunkenness and gluttony as religious observance; and those who renounce world in word but choose to remain under worldly burdens and cares. Augustine admitted that these were a 'great multitude' with the Catholic faith. Still, he went on to say to the Manichees: 'I admonish you, that you should finally stop maligning the Catholic church, censuring the moral life of the very people whom she herself condemns and whom [she] daily strives to correct, as if with bad children' (*Nunc uos illud admoneo, ut aliquando ecclesiae catholicae maledicere desinatis uituperando mores hominum quos et ipsa condemnat et quos quotidie tamquam malos filios corrigere studet.* CSEL 90. 81). For Augustine, there may have been many in the Catholic church who were failing or even pursuing evil (and he wanted to avoid contact with these), but they were not representative of the 'church' and were by necessity of charity to be sought after and corrected.

⁵⁷ *mor. ecc.* 31.67.

⁵⁸ *Obsecro, uigilate paululum, uidete testamenti utriusque concordiam, qui sit in moribus uitae modus et quo sint referenda omnia, satis aperientem et docentem. ... Salus animi et uia beatitudinis utrarumque scripturarum pace monstratur, et uos latrare potius aduersus haec quam his obtemperare diligitis. Breui dicam quod sentio: audite doctos ecclesiae catholicae uiros tanta pace animi et eo uoto quo uos ego audiui.* CSEL 90. 38-39. Coyle assigns this section to North Africa, see note following.

in practice in his writings. As mentioned above, this began explicitly with *On the Morals* where (at the beginning of the Roman draft)⁵⁹ he stated that he was going to refute 'the two tricks' which the Manichees used to deceive the unwary by presenting his statements which will concur with Catholic teaching.⁶⁰ According to his *Review* (1.7.1), Augustine had encountered Manichee boasting and extravagant claims of piety in his return to Rome in 388 where he had associated with the Manichees four years earlier. His particular background and proximity to their activities spurred him to take up the Catholic defense in writing against their ascetic claims.⁶¹ This defense continued upon his return to Africa, since 'the tension between the Catholics and Manichees had been particularly acute in Africa. It is not surprising that Augustine's works against the Manichees should have become ecclesial in this environment'.⁶² What is slightly surprising, in fact, is that in this period he did not ever explicitly acknowledge himself as a Catholic teacher or as one of the 'learned men of the church'. Furthermore, no indication exists that he was recognized by or directly connected to the organized church in his apologetic capacity. Thus, it is hard to determine Augustine's relationship to the organized church from his Christian polemical writings. It is clear, however, that he sought, as far as he knew, to defend Catholic teaching and to identify his position with it.

The relationship just mentioned (*i.e.* of Augustine the teacher to the organized church) is even more curious in light of the evidence of his leadership within his own Christian community at Thagaste⁶³ and in light of his readiness to criticize even clergy who failed to measure up to his ideal of the learned member of the church.⁶⁴ In the

⁵⁹ see Table 4 above, p. 136-137, for the chronological breakdown of this work.

⁶⁰ *mor. ecc.* 1.2: *hic liber congruentem catholicae disciplinae sententiam nostram de uita et moribus continebit. CSEL* 90. 4.

⁶¹ see J.K. Coyle, 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae: Augustin Chrétien à Rome', in J.K. Coyle, et al., *«De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum», «De quantitate animae» di Agostino d'Ippona* (1991), 17-19, where he notes that Augustine's discussion of asceticism does not really begin in earnest until ch. 31(.65). Up to the end of ch. 30 Augustine's focus was on scripture (though not exclusively), comparing the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, Coyle suggests a double objective/motivation for the work: initially Augustine wanted to answer Manichee criticisms of the scripture; secondly (and Coyle sees this as an identifiably later phenomenon) he wanted to answer Manichaeian ascetic claims (and accusations). I agree with the double impetus for *mor. ecc.* but would see both factors as more concurrent. See Coyle, p. 13-57, for recent discussion of *mor. ecc.* and typically insightful discussion of the period at Rome generally.

⁶² P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 134.

⁶³ see below, *e.g.* p. 147-153, for more details.

⁶⁴ R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 11, comments on *mor. ecc.* 1.1, saying, 'Augustine by no means equates the learned with the [ecclesiastical] hierarchy; even some bishops and priests are apparently men quite content with simple faith'. Augustine's ideal of the learned teacher or member in the church was discussed in ch. 3 (*cf. mor. ecc.* 10.16, for 'holy and most learned men ... in the Catholic church' who explain the scriptures; *mor. ecc.* 10.17, for the 'many mature ones' (*multi senes*) who perceive the incorporeal nature of God'), but from the early writings at Thagaste *cf. mor. ecc.* 31.66 (n. 94), for hermits in contemplation; *mor. ecc.* 31.67, for the commendation of the *patres*' holiness and

beginning of *On the Morals*, Augustine described his intentions in terms of teaching and the teaching of the church. The arguments of the Manichees win the 'applause of the *unlearned*' (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 1.1).⁶⁵ Augustine responded:

For who with even an ordinary mind cannot easily understand that an exposition of the scriptures should be sought from *those who are professed teachers of the [scriptures]*? It can happen, no rather it always happens, that many things [at first] seem absurd to the *uninstructed* which appear to them praiseworthy when they are explained by those *more learned*, and are accepted more eagerly because of the difficulty in explaining them. This happens with the holy books of the Old Testament (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 1.1).⁶⁶

Such ideas were not new. Augustine's view⁶⁷ that some people are gifted with reason and thus can gain insight while others are not so able (thus dividing humanity) had been reinforced by the realization of the numbers in the church who did not consider the pursuit of (spiritual) knowledge and understanding as a central part of their Christian lives.⁶⁸ This view was further reinforced by his continued exposure to intellectual Christianity during his preparation for baptism at Milan and afterwards.

A significant development on this line of thought is seen in the next section of his introduction to *On the Morals* (which Coyle feels was added in Africa).⁶⁹

And if, desiring to learn these things, one should by chance come upon those, *whether bishops or presbyters, overseers or ministers of the Catholic church*, who either generally *do not care to disclose [the Christian] mysteries* or, *content with simple faith, do not care to know the higher things*, one should not despair that the knowledge of the truth exists there where not all from whom things are sought are able to teach, nor are all who seek worthy to learn. Therefore, both diligence and piety are necessary, by the one it comes about that we find knowledge, by the other that we are made worthy to know (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 1.1).⁷⁰

Augustine had apparently had contact with or heard of such deficient clergy and 'officials of the Catholic church' and was not afraid to criticize them despite their offices. He had a two-fold ideal of the Christian teacher: on the one hand was

knowledge; and *mor. ecc.* 33.70, for the 'woman of great ... experience in moral direction and formation and also in instructing the mind' (see below n. 131 for text).

⁶⁵ *Manichaeorum inuentionibus, ... seseque inter imperitorum plausus inani iactatione uentilant.* CSEL 90. 3.

⁶⁶ *Quis enim mediocriter sanus non facile intelligat, scripturarum expositionem ab his petendam esse, qui earum doctores se esse profitentur; fierique posse, immo id semper accidere, ut multa indoctis uideantur absurda, quae cum a doctoribus exponuntur eo laudanda uideantur elatius quo abiectius aspernanda uidebantur et eo accipiantur aperta dulcius quo clausa difficiliter aperiebantur? Hoc fere in sanctis ueteris testamenti libris euenit.* CSEL 90. 3.

⁶⁷ cf. e.g. *ord.* 2.9.26. A view probably gained from Plotinus (cf. e.g. *Enneads* 1.6.4, 9).

⁶⁸ cf. ch. 1, p. 23 (esp. n. 158-161); see also the latter half of *mor. ecc.* 10.17.

⁶⁹ J.K. Coyle, 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae: Augustin Chrétien à Rome', «*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae ...*» ... di Agostino d'Ippona (1991), 18.

⁷⁰ *Nec si ea discere cupiens in aliquos forte inciderit uel episcopos uel presbyteros uel cuiuscumodi ecclesiae catholicae antistites et ministros, qui aut passim caueant nudare mysteria aut contenti simplici fide altiora cognoscere non curarint, desperet ibi esse scientiam ueritatis, ubi neque omnes a quibus quaeritur docere possunt neque omnes qui quaerunt discere digni sunt. Et diligentia igitur et pietas adhibenda est; altero fiet ut scientes inueniamus; altero ut scire mereamur.* CSEL 90. 3-4.

diligence (and the ability) to acquire knowledge; and on the other, the possession of piety which allows one to know what is believed. As at Rome,⁷¹ at Thagaste, Augustine admitted that within the church there were those who are ignorant of the real depths of Christian teaching – those of ‘simple faith’ who could not conceive of the immaterial realms.⁷² Now, however, the category of the ignorant has extended to include even some among the leadership of the church.⁷³ If Augustine felt competent to criticize such clergy, then it is possible that he could see himself fulfilling such positions more suitably.

The citation above is merely one example of an emerging distinction between those who are spiritually minded (the *spiritalis/spirituales*) and those who are physically minded (the *animales* or ‘little ones’).⁷⁴ Augustine had held a two-fold conception of humanity at least since Cassiciacum. Now this conception, originally emerging from a number of background elements,⁷⁵ became increasingly Christianized in the distinction between the spiritual and non-spiritual. In *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans*,⁷⁶ from the very beginning, this conception influenced Augustine the teacher. He had discovered that ‘the other books which we had published against the Manichees’⁷⁷ ‘were understood by the ignorant (*uninstructed*) either not at all or with difficulty’ (*italics mine, Gn. a. Man. 1.1.1*).⁷⁸ He had thus followed the advice of ‘some truly Christian men ... *well trained* in the liberal disciplines’ to write on this subject in ‘common and simple speech’ for the ‘*uneducated ... our weak and little ones*, who find

⁷¹ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 10.17.

⁷² e.g. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.5; 1.5.9. This is not to say that ‘simple faith’ was bad. For Augustine it just was inferior to spiritual faith. In his note on *Gn. a. Man.* 2.25.38, Teske observes that ‘Twice in this chapter Augustine favorably mentions simple faith’ in contrast to Manichee claims of understanding (*FC* 84 (1991), 135 n. 179).

⁷³ of course it is possible that this passage dates to Rome and thus that this is a development which took place while Augustine was there.

⁷⁴ R.J. Teske, ‘Spirituals and Spiritual Interpretation in Augustine’ *Aug. Stud.* 15 (1984), 66f. See also his introduction *FC* 84 (1991), esp. 11–15, and article, ‘*Homo spiritalis* in St. Augustine’s *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*’, *SP* 22 (1989), 351–355.

⁷⁵ such as the hierarchies of neo-Platonism and Manichaean thought.

⁷⁶ cited below as *On Genesis*.

⁷⁷ as discussed in Appendix A (see Table 6 and p. 273) and ch. 3 (see Table 2 and p. 71) it is my position that at the time *Gn. a. Man.* was published (see Appendix A n. 47) only the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*, *imm. an.*, *quant.*, and the first portion of *lib. arb.* had already been finished and made public (though considerable work on *mor. ecc.* and even *mor. Man.* was probably completed before *Gn. a. Man.* was begun, cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine’s De Moribus* (1978), 73–74 and 94). Hence, I take it that these ‘other books’ refer to the completed portion of *On Free Will*; cf. R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 12 n. 27. Coyle (*Augustine’s De Moribus* (1978), 73) does not elaborate much on the identity of Augustine’s first books ‘written with the Manichees in mind, but not written against them explicitly (*apertissime*)’. He simply lists *Acad.* as a possible example of such a work, clarifies that *mor. ecc.* is not an option, and notes that Augustine’s earliest works have various Manichaean allusions.

⁷⁸ *tamen alios libros nostros, quos aduersus Manichaeos edidimus, cum legissent, uiderunt eos ab imperitioribus, aut non aut difficile intelligi. PL* 34. 173.

no way to respond to ... [the Manichees]' (italics mine, *Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2).⁷⁹ These 'little ones' are later described as those 'who are less suited to comprehend invisible things' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.5.9).⁸⁰ On their account, scripture uses anthropomorphic and material descriptions of God and the invisible realms, 'so that even the little ones may take hold of these things' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.5).⁸¹

The opposites of the little ones are the 'spiritual believers': 'But all who understand the scriptures spiritually understand by those terms [*i.e.* anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Christian scriptures] not body parts, but spiritual powers' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.17.27).⁸² Augustine wrote that 'The spiritual believers in the Catholic teaching do not believe that God is defined by a bodily form' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.17.28).⁸³ Teske comments on this in his introduction to *On Genesis*:

What Augustine does not mention, and is often overlooked, is that no one in the West aside from the small group of Neoplatonists in the Church of Milan thought of God as a spiritual substance.⁸⁴ These latter were the 'spiritual believers' or 'her learned men', while the ordinary faithful in the Church were the 'little ones', men who could not rise up to a spiritual understanding.⁸⁵

Certainly the majority of Christians in the West did not yet hold to such a 'spiritual' view of God. Yet, Augustine's discussions do not present such a confined locus of Western 'spiritual' comprehension. Instead, what is presented by Augustine is a picture of a considerable minority throughout the church of those who understand

⁷⁹ *Placuit enim mihi quorundam uere christianorum sententia, qui cum sint eruditi liberalibus litteris ... et me beneuolentissime monuerunt ut communem loquendi consuetudinem non desererem, si errores illos tam perniciosos ab animis etiam imperitorum expellere cogitarem. Hunc enim sermonem usitatum et simplicem etiam docti intelligunt, illum autem indocti non intelligunt ...*

Solent ergo Manichaei Scripturas Ueteris Testamenti, quas non nouerunt, uituperare, et uituperatione infirmos et paruulos nostros, non inuenientes quomodo sibi respondeant, irridere atque decipere. PL 34. 173.

⁸⁰ *Ideo autem nominibus uisibilium rerum haec appellata sunt, propter paruulorum infirmitatem, qui minus idonei sunt inuisibilia comprehendere. PL 34. 178.*

⁸¹ *et caetera quae in eodem libro sic exponuntur per ordinem, quemadmodum possint ea paruuli capere. PL 34. 176. See also Gn. a. Man. 1.17.27.*

⁸² *Sed omnes qui spiritualiter intelligunt Scripturas, non membra corporea per ista nomina, sed spirituales potentias accipere didicerunt. PL 34. 186.*

⁸³ *Sed tamen nouerint in catholica disciplina spirituales fideles non credere Deum forma corporea definitum. PL 34. 186.*

⁸⁴ I am indebted to D.F. Wright's reminder in this connection, that a distinction must be made between believing that God was, for example in Tertullian's sense, material (*i.e.* that 'spirit' was material) and believing literally in anthropomorphisms. The former of these positions is certainly a sophisticated one, even if of an entirely different slant than Augustine's neo-Platonic perspective.

⁸⁵ R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 14 (*cf.* 15). Yet, it would be surprising (see n. 56, 58, and 66, along with the provisional sense of Augustine's criticism of the clergy in *mor. ecc.* 1.1) if Augustine had not found such ideas at all outside Milan (surely there would have been some indication of this lack among the ascetic communities he describes from Rome (see n. 94 and the *patres* described in n. 102). Presumably the ones who advised him on the writing style of *Gn. a. Man.* (see n. 79) were such spiritual persons and not among his close circle of traveling companions). Otherwise, one might expect some comment from Augustine about the wholesale failure to find these things outside Milan.

spiritually, while the majority do not, though they believe correctly thanks to the church.

The little ones could not reach spiritual comprehension where they were at present. However, Augustine was not completely hopeless about any spiritual progress for such ones, and he, as a spiritual, was endeavoring to enable those who could to come to spiritual understanding. Early in *On Genesis*, speaking of God's light (which is greater than the sun) with reference to John 1.9, he wrote,

But that light feeds, not the eyes of irrational birds, but the pure heart of those who believe in God and turn themselves from the love of visible and temporal things to the fulfillment of his commands. If they wish, all people can do this, because that light enlightens every person coming into this world (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.6).⁸⁶

This enlightenment to turn from the love of carnal things to God and the fulfillment of his commands (a spiritual way of life) does not, however, carry with it any assurance that in this life 'all persons' can experience spiritual understanding. For example, later in *On Genesis* Augustine was doubtful if the intelligence of more than a few persons can understand the way in which the will acts on the body.⁸⁷ Speaking of the state of humanity and the changes sin brought in the garden of Eden, Augustine explained:

Therefore, after [Adam] sinned by departing from the commandment of God and was dismissed from paradise, he remained such that he was animal. And on that account, all of us who were born from him after sin at first bear within us the animal man until we attain the spiritual Adam, that is our Lord Jesus Christ, who committed no sin [1 Pet. 2.22]. Having been recreated and made alive by him, we will be brought back into paradise, where that thief merited (attained) to be with him on the day on which he ended this life [*cf. Lk.* 23.45] (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.8.10).⁸⁸

Clearly, Augustine thought himself (and all Christians) to be on a journey from the 'animal man' he had been, while bound by sin, to the complete spirituality of the eternal life in the paradise of God. On earth he had become spiritual by receiving the aid of Christ, and as one whose Christian rebirth has enabled spiritual perception, he was progressing in the Christian life accordingly. This mental framework had implications for Augustine's view of and relation to others in the Catholic communion. The beginning of *On Genesis* implies that Augustine felt an obligation to 'our weak and little

⁸⁶ *Illud autem lumen non irrationabilium auium oculos pascit, sed pura corda eorum qui Deo credunt, et ab amore uisibilium rerum et temporalium se ad eius praecepta implenda conuertunt. Quod omnes homines possunt si uelint, quia illud lumen omnem hominem illuminat uenientem in hunc mundum.* PL 34. 176; *cf. Gn. a. Man.* 1.22.33 for moving from carnal to spiritual interpretation.

⁸⁷ *Gn. a. Man.* 1.7.12; *cf. R.J. Teske, FC* 84 (1991), 60 n. 43.

⁸⁸ *Itaque postquam peccauit, recedens a praecepto Dei, et dimissus est de paradiso, in hoc remansit ut animalis esset. Et ideo animale hominem prius agimus omnes, qui de illo post peccatum nati sumus, donec assequamur spiritualem Adam, id est Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui peccatum non fecit (1 Pet. 2.22); et ab illo recreati et uiuificati, restituamur in paradysum, ubi latro ille cum ipso eo die meruit esse, quo uitam istam finiuit (Lk. 23.45).* PL 34. 201. Augustine went on to quote 1 Cor. 15.44-46.

ones'⁸⁹ as a spiritual man within the Catholic church (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2). Moreover, in this work and in *On the Morals* Augustine was writing for the church in defense of its teaching and the regulation of its communion. Finally, he intended to bring the Manichees into the Catholic church.⁹⁰ The question arises: what other actions,⁹¹ if any, of an ecclesiological nature can be observed in line with Augustine's relationship with the larger Christian communion? Some answers to this question will emerge as Augustine's practice of and thought on the religious life during 388/389 is examined.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

For Augustine, coming to spiritual understanding required not only diligence but also piety.⁹² This suggests that fruitful inquiry can be made into his pursuit of and thought on the religious life. In fact, the significance of the religious life for an understanding of his ecclesiological development at Thagaste is quite substantial. For example, the last five chapters of *On the Morals* grant some insight into the extent to which he had been influenced by his exposure to ascetic groups and into the aspects of the personal and communal Christian life which he felt important. These chapters contain considerable information about 'monastic'/ascetic practice, both in the West and East. Augustine chose to conclude his arguments in *On the Morals* by presenting the Manichees with Catholic examples of 'the greatest continence': 'perfect Christians for whom complete chastity is not just something requiring praise, but to be engaged in as well' (*mor. ecc.* 31.65).⁹³ 'For who can be unaware', he says, 'that the multitude of Christians practicing the highest continence grows and spreads each day, in the highest proportion in the East and Egypt'. These 'multitudes' have

removed themselves entirely from the sight of all men. Being content with only bread and water, which are brought to them at determined intervals of time, they inhabit the most desolate lands. Fully enjoying *their converse with God, to whom they cling with pure minds, and the most*

⁸⁹ *infirmos et paruulos nostros.* PL 34. 173.

⁹⁰ on this last point see esp. *mor. ecc.* 17.32 *ad fin.*, cf. *mor. ecc.* 18.34 *ad fin.*

⁹¹ writing against the Manichees was not entirely an ecclesial action, to be sure, but certainly this ecclesial side (acting for the church, protecting, aiming to convert) was present. The early anti-Manichaean writings (and I would suggest the others) were written in light of a framework of the church and its communion of members.

⁹² cf. *mor. ecc.* 1.1 *ad fin.*

⁹³ *Iam enim accipite, Manichaei, [exempla] perfectorum Christianorum, quibus summa castitas non laudanda tantum, sed etiam capessenda uisa est ... Quis enim nescit summae continentiae hominum Christianorum multitudinem per totum orbem in dies magis magisque diffundi et in oriente maxime atque Aegypto, quod uos nullo modo potest latere?* CSEL 90. 69. This refers back to the Manichee boasts about superior ascetic practice in *mor. ecc.* 1.2 (cf. *retr.* 1.7.1). For a summary list of the five groups he identified in *mor. ecc.*, see ch. 3, p. 116.

happy contemplation of his beauty, which cannot be perceived except by the understanding of the saints (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 31.66).⁹⁴

Again the idea of the necessity of attaining holiness (here by ascetic practice) as a prerequisite to gaining understanding is indicated. Also apparent is the natural integration of neo-Platonism and Christianity in Augustine's thought: converse with God (the proper result of the ascetic life) is the happy life of pure minds perceiving and contemplating his beauty. Although Augustine had high praise for the Antonian hermits, evidence exists that he was aware of opinion within the church, which he will not contradict, that considered their actions extreme.⁹⁵ Augustine wrote of the anchorites,

Concerning these ones I shall say nothing, because some individuals feel that they have gone to extremes in abandoning human things, not understanding how much benefit there is for us in the prayers of these souls and from their exemplary lives ... The temperance and continence of the most holy Christians of the Catholic faith has progressed to such a point that it seems [to some] to require considerable restriction and to be recalled to within human limits. That these should have been so far elevated beyond human norms is, even in this desire [for restraints], acknowledged by those whom it displeases (*mor. ecc.* 31.66).⁹⁶

Augustine's comments here (and elsewhere) make it clear that he was not an extreme ascetic. He praised both those among the 'great numbers of the Catholic faithful who do not use worldly goods' and those who 'use them as though not using them' (*mor. ecc.* 35.77)⁹⁷ possessing goods but not possessed by them.⁹⁸

He then passed from this brief praise of eremitic ascetics to those following a more coenobitic lifestyle (apparently still referring to desert ascetics of the East);⁹⁹

those who, despising and abandoning the enticements of this world, have come together in common for the purpose of the most pure and chaste life. They spend their time together, living

⁹⁴ *qui secretissimi penitus ab omni hominum conspectu, pane solo, qui eis per digesta interualla temporum affertur, et aqua contenti, desertissimas terras incolunt perfruentes colloquio dei, cui puris mentibus inhaeserunt et eius pulchritudinis contemplatione beatissimi, quae nisi sanctorum intellectu percipi non potest. CSEL 90. 69-70.* This 'perception' by the saints is possible because their minds have been cleansed by the medicine of Christian *disciplina*, cf. *quant.* 33.74-75 (esp. *ad fin.*); *mor. ecc.* 7.11 *ad fin.*; and 28.55-56.

⁹⁵ this does not imply agreement with such sentiment, but apparently he felt the need to respect it.

⁹⁶ *Nihil, inquam, de his loquar, uidentur enim nonnullis res humanas plus quam oporteret deseruisse, non intelligentibus quantum nobis eorum animus in orationibus prosit et uita ad exemplum ... Tantum isti admonendi sunt, qui sese inaniter iactant, in tantum processisse temperantiam et continentiam sanctissimorum catholicae fidei Christianorum, ut restringenda nonnullis et quasi ad humanos fines reuocanda uideatur; usque adeo supra homines illorum animos euasisse ab his etiam quibus id displicet iudicatur. CSEL 90. 70; J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 231 *ad fin.* and 232f., comments on this passage and its context.*

⁹⁷ *Sunt in ecclesia catholica innumerabiles fideles qui hoc mundo non utuntur, sunt qui utuntur tamquam non utentes. CSEL 90. 82.*

⁹⁸ see also, more generally, *mor. ecc.* 34.76-35.80; and J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 204.

⁹⁹ J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 205-206.

in prayer, reading, and discussion; none puffed up with pride,¹⁰⁰ none disturbing by their stubbornness, none livid with envy. But in modesty, restraint, and peace, they offer up the most pleasing offering of their lives – lives of the greatest concord and activity – to God. None of them possesses anything of their own and no one is a burden to the others (*mor. ecc.* 31.67).¹⁰¹

Here, Augustine touched on a communal element which will also be seen in his reference to western ‘monasticism’. Moreover, for Augustine, the type of (offering of) life he described was in itself spiritual worship of God and pleasing to God. The goals of the community described in this passage, such as service to God by means of adherence to him in prayer, reading, discussion, simple and mutually harmonious living, were already important to Augustine. He also commented in detail about the communities’ organization and work.

They work with their hands those things that can support the body and yet not distract their minds from God. But they hand the produce over to those whom they call ‘deans’ ... [who receive the fruit of the brothers labors] ... [and then] render an account to one whom they call ‘father’. But these fathers are not only remarkable in their most holy lives, but also in their most excellent divine doctrine. They excel in all things. Without any arrogance they care for those they call sons, directing them with great authority and so receive great voluntary obedience (*mor. ecc.* 31.67).¹⁰²

This conception of an ideal leader (the *pater* of this passage) probably influenced Augustine’s own actions within his community at Thagaste. He had been involved in spiritual instruction since Cassiciacum and had presented instruction towards the spiritual life in increasingly Christian terms at Rome.¹⁰³ Congruent with his previous actions, he should have been interested (by desire and by obligation) in examples of spiritual and instructing heads of small devoted communities, especially given his

¹⁰⁰ despite the intellectual elitism in some of his discussions, pride was a conscious issue for Augustine and was considered by him to be one of the worst sins. He stated later to the church at Hippo that he had avoided a clerical role out of reverence and humility (see s. 312.1-2) and we note the admiration of the ascetic *patres*’ leadership without ‘*superbia*’ in *mor. ecc.* 31.67 (see n. 102 below). E.L. Fortin, ‘Augustine’s «De Quantitate Animae» or the Spiritual Dimensions of Human Existence’, in J.K. Coyle, et al., «*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*» ... di Agostino d’Ippona (1991), 141f., states that ‘None of the great writers of the past believed in the possibility of popular enlightenment and most of them cautioned against it’ (p. 141). At this stage at Thagaste, Augustine was no exception to this skepticism, though to him one of the greatest achievements of Christianity was to bring right knowledge (belief in the spiritual) and the right practice of life to everyone, even if understanding of truth was more limited (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.6 and *uera rel.* 3.3-4).

¹⁰¹ *qui contemptis atque desertis mundi huius illecebris, in communem uitam sanctissimam et castissimam congregati, simul aetatem agunt, uiuentes in orationibus, in lectionibus, in disputationibus, nulla superbia tumidi, nulla peruicacia turbulenti, nulla inuidia liuidi, sed modesti, uerecundi, placati concordissimam uitam et intentissimam in deum, gratissimum munus ipsi offerunt, a quo ista posse meruerunt? Nemo quicquam possidet proprium, nemo cuiquam onerosus est.* CSEL 90. 70-71.

¹⁰² *Operantur manibus ea quibus et corpus pasci possit et a deo mens impediri non possit. Opus autem suum tradunt eis quos decanos uocant ... Illi autem decani ... rationem tamen etiam ipsi reddunt uni, quem patrem uocant. Hi uero patres non solum sanctissimi moribus sed etiam diuina doctrina excellentissimi, omnibus rebus excelsi, nulla superbia consulunt iis quos filios appellant, magna sua in iubendo auctoritate, magna illorum in obtemperando uoluntate.* CSEL 90. 71-72.

¹⁰³ cf. ch. 3, p. 83-85.

penchant for intimate communal life. Augustine's admiration of the lifestyle described in *On the Morals* is obvious: 'Even if I wished to praise these morals, this life, this institution, or this order, I could not do it justice with (mere) words' (*mor. ecc.* 31.68).¹⁰⁴ The practice of prayer, reading scripture, and engaging in spiritual discussion, as well as the abandonment of possessions and of working for personal advancement are all elements recorded of Augustine at Thagaste.¹⁰⁵ Although he admired, or practiced, such things, this does not necessarily imply that he had completely adopted the ascetic communal model(s) which he had observed and recorded.¹⁰⁶ Probably, at least in its initial phases, Augustine's community at Thagaste was a mélange of Christian *otium*, ascetic community, and individual pursuit after God in the encouraging proximity of like-minded 'spiritual' persons.

The eastern coenobites and the urban ascetic houses mentioned thus far in *On the Morals* are not, however, the only Christian *exempla* which Augustine discussed. As he himself said:

The moral excellence of the Catholic church is not ... confined, however, ... to those whose great lifestyle I have [just] recounted ... For I have known many bishops who were the best and most holy of men, as well as many presbyters, and many deacons and every other kind of minister of the divine sacraments – whose virtue seems to me the more admirable and worthy of greater praise because it is more difficult to achieve surrounded by all sorts of people and to maintain amidst the *turmoil of life*. For these great men preside over not just the healthy but also those who require healing.¹⁰⁷ The *vices of the multitude must be borne with in order that they may be cured* ... It is very difficult [in these circumstances] to hold to this *best manner of life* and to keep one's mind peaceful and tranquil. Indeed, to explain briefly, these men live among those who are learning how to live; the others [previously mentioned] where it is being lived (*italics mine, mor. ecc.* 32.69).¹⁰⁸

Before commenting on this significant passage, it is important to note that Augustine considered all the groups he discussed to be within the Catholic church. He clearly

¹⁰⁴ *Hos mores, hanc uitam, hunc ordinem, hoc institutum si laudare uelim, neque digne ualeo.* CSEL 90. 73.

¹⁰⁵ Possidius, *uita Aug.* 3, lists the giving up of possessions (*cf. uita Aug.* 2), meditation on scripture, prayers, and good works. That these things were objects of attention for Augustine at Thagaste is clear from *mor. ecc.* 31.67.

¹⁰⁶ this issue will be taken up below, p. 153f. and 172-185.

¹⁰⁷ these comments reckon back to the medicinal *disciplina* which heals the soul, described in the Roman writings (*e.g. mor. ecc.* 28.55); *cf. mor. Man.* 11.22. Ambrose would have been an obvious example of such a 'great man', *cf. J.J. O'Donnell, Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 340-341.

¹⁰⁸ *Neque tamen ita sese anguste habent ecclesiae catholicae mores optimi, ut eorum tantum uitam, quos commemorauimus, arbitrarier esse laudandos. Quam enim multos episcopos optimos uiros sanctissimosque cognoui, quam multos presbyteros, quam multos diaconos et cuiuscumque ministros diuinorum sacramentorum, quorum uirtus eo mihi mirabilior et maiore praedicatione dignior uidetur, quo difficilius est eam in multiplici hominum genere et in ista uitam turbulentiore seruare. Non enim sanatis magis quam sanandis hominibus praesunt. Perpetiendae sunt uitae multitudinis ut curentur ... Difficillimum est hic tenere optimum uitae modum et animum pacatum atque tranquillum. Quippe, ut breui explicem, hi agunt ubi uiuere discitur, illi ubi uiuitur.* CSEL 90. 73-74.

viewed various Catholic ascetics as extensions of the church and its different parts.¹⁰⁹ Like the hermits, the clergy are discussed briefly with no comment on their daily manner of life. Augustine did refer to the clergy's as the 'best life' (*optimum uitae modum*). However, the suggestion is that clergy in the world can only just manage to live this 'best life'. His admiration was for their ability to live holy lives despite their surroundings – the spiritually 'sick' and the 'turmoil of life' – something which Augustine felt unable and did not want to do.¹¹⁰ This aversion is reinforced in a letter written to an ailing Nebridius in 389¹¹¹ where Augustine said:

God has granted to a certain few, whom he has wished to be rulers of the churches, that they can look forward to death not only without flinching, but even to eagerly desire it and to undertake the labors of their responsibilities without any anxiety. But I do not think that those who are attracted to the administrations of this world by the love of temporal honors, nor to those who, when they have been deprived of it, long for the busy life, will be allowed to participate in this great good which we seek – familiarity with death amidst the din and disturbance of meetings and running about. *It is possible for both groups, however, to be sanctified [deificari] in a peaceful and quiet life [otium].* But if this is false, then I am of all people, not the most stupid, but certainly the most slothful, since, unless a certain amount of untroubled leisure is granted me, I am not able to enjoy or love that pure good (*italics mine, ep. 10.2*).¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ by the writing of this section of *mor. ecc.*, Augustine well understood the titular, unitary, and universal uses of 'Catholic' and his own uses fluctuate between different nuances of the term. In general, his reference was not to the organized, sacramental church (e.g. in *mor. ecc.* 31.65-33.73; only one of the five groups which are contained 'in the Catholic church' clearly has to do with the institutional church, i.e. that mentioned in *mor. ecc.* 32.69) but to the multitude of Christians and Christian groups in which the Christian ideal of spiritual understanding of and relationship with God was being realized in humble, pure lives devoted to him.

¹¹⁰ Augustine's preference for a more uncluttered, more carefree life (as well as his concerns over the temptations accompanying public position and responsibility) are well known; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), ch. 11: 'Christianae Vitae Otium', 115f. Despite the real opportunities of a sort of Christian version of the *ambitio saeculi* which Augustine might have feared and wanted to protect himself from, the fact that there were many selfish reasons that would have reinforced any desire to refrain from an official post in the Church should not be ignored. One can trace a line of desire for release from the '*turbulentas humanae uitae*' (*conf.* 6.14.24) from 386 (e.g. Cassiciacum) and before. P. Brown notes that: 'When Augustine retired to Cassiciacum ... he would have appeared to be following a long-established and delightful tradition: delivered from the cares of a public career, he was about to enter upon a life of creative leisure, dedicated to serious pursuits. This was the ancient ideal of *otium liberale*, of a "cultured retirement" [cf. *ord.* 1.2.4] (*Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 115). Indeed, Brown notes that Augustine speaks of it as a time of *Christianae uitae otium*, a 'Christian otium' ... in the *Review* 1.1.1. This ideal was to form the background of Augustine's life from this time until his ordination as a priest in 391. Moreover, the modifications Augustine made in the way in which he, personally and in community, pursued the ideal of Christian philosophy, probably were a response to the understanding that any retirement project or community had to fit into the overarching rubric of the universal Catholic church. Brown continues 'For Augustine's "true Philosophy" was also the religion of a universal church'.

¹¹¹ G. Folliet, "Deificari in otio" Augustin, *Epistula 10,2*, *Rech. Aug.* 2 (1962), 225.

¹¹² *dedit quidem deus paucis quibusdam, quos ecclesiarum gubernatores esse uoluit, ut et illam non solum expectarent fortiter, sed alacriter etiam desiderarent et harum obeundarum labores sine ullo angore susciperent; sed neque his, qui ad huius modi administrationes temporalis honoris amore raptantur, neque rursum his, qui cum sunt priuati, negotiosam uitam appetunt, hoc tantum bonum concedi arbitror, ut inter strepitus inquietosque conuentus atque discursus cum morte familiaritatem, quam quaerimus, faciant; deificari enim utrisque in otio licebat. aut si hoc falsum est, ego sum omnium ne dicam stultissimus, certe ignauissimus, cui nisi proueniat quaedam secunda cessatio, sincerum illud bonum gustare atque amare non possum.* CSEL 34.2.1. 23-24. G. Folliet in his significant article "Deificari in otio" Augustin, *Epistula 10,2* in *Rech. Aug.* 2 (1962), 225-236, has commented in

This passage indicates that the clerical life, with its busyness and responsibilities, and lacking the opportunity for the leisure of study, reflection, or time with friends, was not the kind of life which Augustine desired. Indeed, he felt that the benefits of leisure, in proper proportion, were necessary to his successful spiritual life of service and contemplation of God. At the end of the citation above from *On the Morals* (n. 108), Augustine implied that at Thagaste he had come to a place where the spiritual life was lived (which included quiet *otium*, remove from the ignorant, etc.), in distinction to the clergy who lived surrounded by the difficulties and temptations of the world. The tenor and quantity of his discussion of admirable Christian living (e.g. of the five groups of Christian *exempla*) focused on those who combined ascetic and communal elements in their lives in a quiet environment with some distance from the general mass of believers.

Augustine recorded in his *Confessions* and in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* that he struggled greatly with giving up his secular career with all its benefits, attention, and activity.¹¹³ In the preceding passages from 388/389, he clearly identified the clerical role with these same dangers.¹¹⁴ Apparently, the dangers which he knew from his past life made him very cautious about the possibility of becoming involved in the clergy. However, it seems just as important for him to maintain the kind of semi-reclusive life free from official obligations in order to pursue contemplation and to enjoy himself.¹¹⁵

Besides these more practical aspects, there are also some budding theological considerations in these passages about the clergy. For example, when discussing the clergy's responsibility to be around the 'sick' and the 'healthy' in the church, Augustine's statement that the sick in the church must be borne with in order to be cured may harbor the beginnings of his ecclesiological understanding of the wheat and

detail on this passage and letter. He notes that in the brief and charged 'formulas' of this passage, 'Augustin décrit sa vie ascétique et ce qu'elle lui procure dès ici-bas: joie, bonheur, tranquillité, sécurité, intimité avec Dieu'. All of these find their focus in the phrase Augustine used to sum up this life: '*deificari enim utrisque in otio licebat*'. Folliet (p. 226f.) places Augustine's Christian comments, influenced by asceticism, in their cultural and philosophical context (e.g. noting the 'double theme of retirement and purification' which was present in neo-Platonism (p. 229)). Most significantly for the present discussion, he clarifies that Augustine was not *dependent* on Christianity of its ascetic/'monastic' examples exclusively for the aspect of life he describes at Thagaste (e.g. Folliet discusses parallels in Porphyry, Cicero, and Plotinus).

¹¹³ e.g. *sol.* 1.10.17; *conf.* 6.6.9; 6.9.19.

¹¹⁴ an identification which probably began during his observations of Ambrose; see J.J. O'Donnell, on *conf.* 6.3.3, in *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 340-341 (cf. v. 3. 229), though Ambrose surely would have been among the 'few' of *ep.* 10.2 and the successful clergy in *mor. ecc.* 32.69.

¹¹⁵ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1970), 410-411. Coyle notes that Augustine's desire to live a life of contemplation and retirement ruled out, in his own mind, the clerical life. 'A cleric of whatever rank would have too much difficulty ... in keeping "a peaceful and tranquil soul," too many distractions that would interfere with "contemplation of the One." The clerical state might be the "optimus uitae modus"; but it was not, Augustine believed, the ideal state for him' (p. 411).

the tares.¹¹⁶ As previously seen, there is an identification of the institutional church as a sort of Christian nursery.¹¹⁷ These and other theological themes will be considered in due course.

It remains to consider Augustine's use of the term 'many' in his reference to acquaintances among the clergy. The use is doubtless rhetorical but it must be accepted that Augustine had made acquaintance with a fair number of clergymen by this point, although very little information about such contacts exists.¹¹⁸ In Thagaste, he began to employ terms (among other ecclesiastical ones) denoting offices and functions within the organized church, implying a greater familiarity with official church structure. This implication is strengthened by the following brief survey of ecclesiastical vocabulary employed by Augustine in this period, such as: 'heresy',¹¹⁹ 'baptism',¹²⁰ 'bishop', 'presbyter', 'minister', 'deacon',¹²¹ 'martyrdom',¹²² 'religion',¹²³ 'catechumens',¹²⁴ 'sacraments',¹²⁵ and 'our mysteries and sacred rites'.¹²⁶ Such terms do not yet occur with great frequency, but there is an obvious increase in the breadth of Augustine's Christian (and ecclesial) vocabulary.¹²⁷ Also significant is the connection of the divine sacraments to the clergy (*cf. mor. ecc.* 32.69) – an aspect lacking in his discussions of the other four groups of Catholic *exempla*.¹²⁸ It is not the case that Augustine was uninterested in the institutional church (he may well have been a regular attender of the services in Rome and Thagaste as both Perler and O'Donnell think)¹²⁹ or that he saw it

¹¹⁶ for more details on the emergence of this understanding at Thagaste, see below, p. 162f.

¹¹⁷ *cf. mor. ecc.* 10.17 *ad fin.* and *quant.* 33.76. See also ch. 3, p. 78-80.

¹¹⁸ J.K. Coyle lists the known clerical contacts to this point in *Augustine's De Moribus* (1970), 221-224 (though hardly ones expected for such criticism). R.J. Teske argues that in general North African clergy were uneducated, mentioning the simplicity with which Augustine addresses a collection of the clergy at Hippo in his sermon on the creed (*FC* 84 (1991), 11 n. 25).

¹¹⁹ e.g. *mor. Man.* 8.11, *cf. mor. Man.* 20.75 (*haeresis*); *mor. ecc.* 33.72 (*haeretici*). Not surprisingly this term is found throughout *Gn. a. Man.* (13 times).

¹²⁰ *mor. ecc.* 35.78 (*baptismate*); *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37, *cf.* 2.21.31.

¹²¹ *mor. ecc.* 1.1; 32.69: *episcopus* (*cf. mor. Man.* 20.74), *artistites*, *presbyteros* (*cf. mor. Man.* 19.71, 72), *ministros* (*cf. mor. Man.* 16.41 and 19.70); and 32.69 (*diaconus*); *cf.* 'gubernatores ecclesiarum' in *ep.* 10.2 (CSEL 34.2.1. 23).

¹²² e.g. *mor. ecc.* 9.15, *cf. mor. ecc.* 35.77 (*martyres*).

¹²³ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 74.75 (*religioni*); *ep.* 11.2; *mor. Man.* 11.22 (*ueram religionem*).

¹²⁴ *mor. ecc.* 35.80 (*catechumenis*).

¹²⁵ *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37; *mor. ecc.* 32.69 (*diuinum sacramentum*).

¹²⁶ *ep.* 11.2; *mor. ecc.* 1.1; 19.35; 24.45 (*mysteria*); *cf. mor. ecc.* 12.20 (*mysteriorum*).

¹²⁷ see Appendix B for comments on most of these words.

¹²⁸ probably illustrating how Augustine recognized that certain ecclesial aspects were confined to the institutional church and its hierarchy. While the sacraments are not emphasized here (nor at Thagaste generally), their mention may indicate a sensitivity to the ecclesiastical atmosphere of North Africa where, of course, the prerogative and holiness commensurate to it, of ministering the sacraments had been and was of such intense focus.

¹²⁹ see ch. 3, p. 112 and 120-121. An interesting usage of the term 'ecclesia' is found in *mor. Man.* 17.61 *ad fin.* where Augustine says of a Manichee claim: 'therefore, it returns to that feeble argument, i.e. that the things which the hearers injure among plants are expiated through the fruits which they bring to your church' (*Reditur ergo ad illud inualidum, ea quae in stirpibus auditores*

as unimportant (as chapter three has shown). Still Augustine, having been brought into the Catholic church by the rites, mysteries, and *disciplina* of its institutions, was now actively pursuing his relationship with God and did not need to focus on Catholic church institution or hierarchy.¹³⁰

The last group commented on in *On the Morals* Augustine described as

another praiseworthy class of Christians whom I do not wish to disdain, namely, those who live in the cities, but with a life far removed from the ordinary. I myself saw at Milan an association of holy men, not small in number, under the direction of an excellent and most learned presbyter. At Rome, I know of a number of groups in each of which *one excelling in his sobriety, prudence, and divine knowledge, presides over the others*, living with them in Christian charity, holiness, and liberty. Lest they should be a burden to others, in the manner of the East and the authority of the Apostle Paul, they work for themselves with their hands ... they practice incredible fasts ... Not only men, but widows and virgins also live this way, presided over by a woman of great sobriety and experience, who is *not only skilled in moral direction and formation but also equipped for instructing (building up) the mind* (italics mine, *mor. ecc.* 33.70).¹³¹

As mentioned before, the fact that the ascetic house in Milan was 'under the direction' of a priest is noteworthy. In general, a distinctive of western monasticism was that, unlike the sometimes more independent asceticism of the East, it emerged and developed in close connection with (and often formally linked to) ecclesiastical figures and institutions. Augustine certainly saw ascetic communities as part of the Catholic church and affiliated to the institutions of the church. Yet, as the preceding discussion and citation has shown, an explicit connection was not necessary. Brown has noted about the Thagaste period that,

although Augustine's ideal might be that of a Neo-Platonic recluse, the only alternative he can now envisage to this ideal, is the active life of a Catholic bishop. For in Thagaste he had been brought face to face with the organized life of the African church ... he was a local man.¹³²

laedunt, expiari per fructus quos ad ecclesiam uestram ferunt. CSEL 90. 143). Augustine was comfortable describing a Manichee corporate assembly as a 'church' and the idea of the church as a place of cult is obvious (the only such clear reference in 388-389). The context, however, would hardly support any identification of Augustine's usage of 'church' here with an emphasis on or attachment to corporate cult participation on his part.

¹³⁰ cf. R.J. Teske's comments in relation to this on faith and understanding in *Gn. a. Man.* (FC 84 (1991), 65 n. 58).

¹³¹ *Nec ideo tamen laudabile Christianorum genus contempserim eorum scilicet qui in ciuitatibus degunt a uulgari uita remotissimi. Uidi ego sanctorum diuersorium Mediolani non paucorum hominum, quibus unus presbyter praeerat uir optimus et doctissimus. Romae etiam plura cognoui, in quibus singuli grauitate atque prudentia et diuina scientia praepollentes ceteris secum habitantibus praesunt Christiana caritate, sanctitate, libertate uiuentibus; ne ipsi quidem cuiquam onerosi sunt, sed orientis more et Pauli apostoli auctoritate manibus suis se transigunt. Ieiunia etiam prorsus incredibilia multos exercere didici, non quotidie semel sub noctem reficiendo corpus, quod est usquequaque usitatissimum, sed continuum triduum uel amplius saepissime sine cibo ac potu ducere. Neque hoc in uiris tantum sed etiam in feminis; quibus item multis uiduis et uirginibus simul habitantibus et lana ac tela uictum quaeritantibus praesunt singulae grauissimae probatissimae, non tantum in instituendis componendis moribus sed etiam instruendis mentibus peritae ac paratae.* CSEL 90. 74-75.

¹³² P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 133.

In fact, quite another ideal is revealed – that of the leaders (*patres*) of the coenobitic Christians.¹³³

It is quite probable that a number of the ascetic/‘monastic’ elements which have been noted in the discussion above influenced Augustine’s community at Thagaste. Before turning to them, it is important to consider Augustine’s own role in the community. Clearly, he was a (and probably the) motivating force behind it, since it occupied his part of his family’s small property.¹³⁴ Moreover, the 83 *Different Questions*, a collection begun during this period at Thagaste (the first fifty or so entries were completed by 391)¹³⁵ of Augustine’s responses on various issues to those he was living with at Thagaste, implies his centrality to the community’s intellectual life. In his correspondence with Nebridius, he expressed responsibility for the (spiritual) well being of his ‘brothers’ living with him at Thagaste (*ep.* 10.1; *cf. ep.* 5). Yet there is not the evidence to fully equate Augustine with the leaders of the ascetic communities recorded above (or of those communities with his). Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Augustine wanted to avoid any official role or be responsible for a highly organized community. More discussion of his role in the Thagaste community will be found below; but to judge from the comments of Possidius, as well as Augustine’s activities as a Christian writer, Augustine seems to have simply become, in spiritual and intellectual direction, an *unofficial* ‘father’ within his Christian community at Thagaste.¹³⁶

THE THAGASTE COMMUNITY

The discussions of the ascetic communities and persons listed above (specifically the communal, desert ascetics of the East and the ‘monastic’ groups of the West in Milan and Rome) can be compared with what is known of Augustine’s own practice because of the record of it made by Possidius in his *Sancti Augustini Vita* (ch. 3).¹³⁷ The *vita Aug.* records that after Augustine returned to Africa, he

¹³³ leaving aside the more ambiguous possibilities of the ‘learned men of the Catholic church’ or even the ‘*serui dei*’. As indicated in ch. 3, *e.g.* p. 114-116, it is probable that Augustine’s admiration of Catholic teachers and of devoted ascetics inspired him in Rome. Yet, he did not imitate either ideal.

¹³⁴ see A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s Ideal of the Religious Life* (1986), 24; G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 107. Augustine refers to the land he sold at Thagaste as a ‘few paternal acres’ (*paucis agellulis*) in *ep.* 126.7.

¹³⁵ see n. 38 above for details.

¹³⁶ nothing is explicit, and Augustine’s wariness of administrative duties cannot be too strongly emphasized.

¹³⁷ hereafter cited simply as *vita Aug.* The extant evidence from Thagaste never describes the communal structure in detail. The disappearance from Augustine’s endeavors of treatises in the dialogical style, like those from Cassiciacum, is lamentable. They may have their drawbacks to a modern critical reader, but for the historian the tangential information about daily life and context which they provide is invaluable.

settled [in Thagaste] for about three years. He soon gave up his possessions [including his home and family lands] and began living with those who similarly adhered to God, with *fastings, prayer and good works, meditating* on the law of God day and night ... And he *taught* about those things which God revealed to his understanding through meditation and prayer, to *those both present and absent*, in his sermons (discourses) and books (italics mine, *uita Aug.* 3).¹³⁸

The basic information gained about the community (and Augustine's actions in it) can be summarized as follows:

1. that he (and presumably his companions) was committed to a communal lifestyle in which things were shared and a modest level of living was maintained;
2. that the purpose of this communal living was to facilitate the clinging to and service to God;¹³⁹ and
3. that this devotion to God entailed: personal reading, meditation, and prayer in God's presence (seeking God's understanding); religious asceticism designed to facilitate this understanding;¹⁴⁰ and teaching of what was gained.¹⁴¹

Further illumination regarding the influence of asceticism on the mode of life at Thagaste can be gained from information in Augustine's other writings. Unfortunately, such information is not very abundant; but a picture can still be gained which does, in fact, mesh with the principles of Christian practice described in the last five chapters of *On the Morals*. In *letter 10*, Augustine spoke of detachment from material things:

Great withdrawal from the tumult of fleeting (transient) things is needed, I believe, for a man to become afraid of nothing; his own hardness, or boldness, or desire for empty glory, or superstitious credulity, is not required. From this withdrawal comes that solid joy, which cannot be ... compared to other [earthly] delights (*ep.* 10.2).¹⁴²

And in *letter 5*, Nebridius commented on Augustine's close relationship with those among whom he lived.

My dear Augustine ... *you show such fortitude and tolerance in serving your fellow citizens ... I will testify that you love God, that to serve him and cling to him is your desire. I wish I could*

¹³⁸ *ad Africam et propriam domum agrosque remeare. Ad quos ueniens, et in quibus constitutus ferme triennio, et a se iam alienatis, cum his qui eidem adhaerebant Deo uiuebat, ieiuniis, orationibus, bonis operibus, in lege Domini meditans die ac nocte. Et de his quae sibi Deus cogitanti atque oranti intellecta reuelabat, et praesentes et absentes sermonibus ac libris docebat.* H.J. Weiskotten, (1919), 44. Augustine's correspondence from Thagaste illustrates the broad range of persons who inquired of him; cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's ... Religious Life* (1986), 26.

¹³⁹ cf. e.g. *ep.* 5, see n. 143.

¹⁴⁰ cf. e.g. *mor. ecc.* 20.37; *Gn. a. Man.* 1.13.19.

¹⁴¹ cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.2.3 *ad fin.*; *uita Aug.* 3-4; see also the discussion in *sol.* of mutual teaching within a devoted community (*sol.* 12.20). *Diu. qu.* adds evidence of the desire to understand incorporeal things, and to a lesser extent Christian teaching, among Augustine's living companions.

¹⁴² *magna secessione a tumultu rerum labentium, mihi crede, opus est, ut non duritia, non audacia, non cupiditate inanis gloriae, non superstitiosa credulitate fiat in homine nihil timere. hinc enim fit illud etiam solidum gaudium nullis omnino laetitiis ulla ex particula conferendum.* CSEL 34.2.1. 24.

call you to my country villa and there rest with you. For I do not fear being called your tempter by *your fellow citizens, whom you love too much and by whom you are too greatly loved* (italics mine, *ep.* 5).¹⁴³

Augustine replied, justifying his inability to visit Nebridius in Carthage on account that 'there are those here who could not come with me, and whom I should think it sinful to desert' (*ep.* 10.1).¹⁴⁴ In Augustine's letters from this period generally, there are theological topics of thought and discussion such as the incarnation and the Trinity, the nature of sin and salvation, etc. – the beliefs of Catholic teaching. Augustine explained to Nebridius that such Christian issues (as opposed to more abstractly philosophical or curious ones) received his focus because they

seemed more worthy than others for devoting thought and attention. For questions concerning this world do not seem to me sufficient for the achievement of the happy life. Even if it gives us pleasure to investigate them, it must be feared that time is spent on them which should be devoted to better things (*ep.* 11.2).¹⁴⁵

Augustine could hardly be said, however, to neglect more philosophical discussion (*cf. diu. qu.* 1-24 and *mag.*). The issue was that such inquiries should serve the end of bringing one closer to God.

Even if there were points of imitation at Thagaste of the ascetic groups with which Augustine had had contact (or heard about), the strong emphasis on instructing the mind (philosophically and liberally) was one thing which separated Augustine's community from the normal 'monastic' community.¹⁴⁶ *Letter* 6 mentions that 'Christ, Plato, and Plotinus' (in synthesis) combine to form the general subject matter of Augustine's correspondence with Nebridius.¹⁴⁷ A quick survey of the titles of the first 25 of his 83 *Questions* yields the following representative sample:¹⁴⁸ Is the soul self-

¹⁴³ *Itane est, mi Augustine? fortitudinem ac tolerantiam negotiis ciuium praestas necdum tibi redditur illa exoptata cessatio? ... ego testabor te deum amare, illi seruire atque inhaerere cupere. uellum ego te in rus meum uocare ibique adquiescere. non enim timebo me seductorem tui dici a ciuibz tuis, quos nimium amas et a quibus nimium amaris.* CSEL 34.2.1. 11.

¹⁴⁴ *at hic sunt, qui neque uenire mecum queant et quos deserere nefas putem.* CSEL 34.2.1. 23.

¹⁴⁵ *sed ea mihi dignior ceteris uisa est, cui operam cogitationis inpenderem. illa namque, quae de hoc mundo quaeruntur, nec satis ad beatam uitam obtinendam mihi uidentur pertinere et, si aliquid adferunt uoluptatis, cum inuestigantur, metuendum est tamen, ne occupent tempus rebus inpendendum melioribus.* CSEL 34.2.1. 26.

¹⁴⁶ just because Augustine placed Christian spiritual topics above non-Christian ones does not mean that he was uninterested in such 'lesser' topics (he was combating what he saw as an over-emphasis on 'lesser' topics by Nebridius, *cf.* also *ep.* 8 and 13.1). The Christian scriptures themselves were written often in 'figures [on which see R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 21-23] so that they might exercise the minds of those seeking the truth and call them from carnal labors to spiritual labors' (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.1.1, where Augustine is speaking specifically about the narrative in *Gen.* 2-3. *Deinde incipit de homine diligentius narrari. Quae omnis narratio non aperte, sed figurate explicatur, ut exerceat mentes quaerentium ueritatem, et spirituali negotio a negotiis carnalibus auocet.* PL 34. 195).

¹⁴⁷ see *ep.* 6 and 7. Even allowing for a reflection of Nebridius' interests superimposed here, it is unlikely that the statement is wholly inaccurate. Few other ascetic/'monastic' communities could probably have had such foci of interest attributed to them.

¹⁴⁸ all of these questions probably come from the first two years at Thagaste, *cf.* n. 38.

existent? (question 1); Is God responsible for human sin? (qu. 3); On evil (qu. 6); Is the soul self-moving? (qu. 8); Can truth be perceived by the bodily senses? (qu. 9); On the intellect (qu. 15) – probably not typical subjects of discussion in western ‘monastic’ communities. The completion at Thagaste of *On Music*, which still seeks to employ liberal education as a means of coming to grasp incorporeal reality,¹⁴⁹ and the discussion in *The Teacher* show that Augustine’s earlier program for spiritual understanding had not been replaced but had been subsumed. The goal remained the happy life (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.8.10; 2.9.12; and, by implication, 2.14.21 *ad fin.*), but the means of achieving it have been broadened and deepened. Augustine did not simply imitate those Christians he admired, but he blended his own background and convictions with positive elements observed elsewhere. Furthermore, in *The Teacher* (another product of this early period at Thagaste, whose emphasis on meditation and scripture has been already noted), the final goal of what might be considered a typical discussion within the Thagaste community at this time reveals how all such discussions were to lead to Christian progress:

Aug. There is one teacher of all in heaven ... whom to love and know is the happy life, which is what all claim they are seeking. But there are but few who may truly rejoice in having really found it ...

Ad. ... Now by his grace, I will love him more fervently the more I progress in learning (*mag.* 14.46).¹⁵⁰

Augustine concluded his discussion of the Catholic church’s *exempla* in *On the Morals* by describing the emphasis on and the dominant role of love in these ‘monastic’ communities:

In these communities, no one is urged to take on austerities which they are not able to bear, and nothing which an individual objects to is forced upon them, nor is one condemned by the others because he confesses himself unable to imitate them. For they remember how strongly the scriptures have commended charity to all ... All their efforts are directed toward thoroughly subduing concupiscence and preserving brotherly love (*mor. ecc.* 33.71).¹⁵¹

The members of the communities lived devoutly, ‘remembering scripture’. Referring to Paul’s discussion of Romans 14.21 in the same chapter, Augustine wrote: ‘Here

¹⁴⁹ *mus.* 6.1.1; this passage and work is discussed in more detail in ch. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Aug. *quod unus omnium magister in caelis sit ... ut ad eum intro conuersi erudiamur, quem diligere ac nosse beata uita est, quam se omnes clamant quaerere, pauci autem sunt, qui eum uere se inuenisse laetentur ...*

Ad. ... *quem iam fauente ipso tanto ardentius diligam, quanto ero in discendo prouector.* CCL 29. 202-203.

¹⁵¹ *Atque inter haec nemo urgetur in aspera quae ferre non potest, nulli quod recusat imponitur nec ideo condemnatur a ceteris, quod in eis imitandis se fatetur inualidum; meminerunt enim quantopere scripturis omnibus commendata sit caritas; ... sed concupiscentiae perdomandae et dilectioni fratrum retinendae inuigilat omnis industria.* CSEL 90. 75-76.

Paul shows how all things should be directed to the end/goal of charity' (*mor. ecc.* 33.71).¹⁵² In *On Genesis*, Augustine wrote:

Therefore no one is able to arrive at the tree of life save by these two ways, that is by the endurance of troubles and the fullness of knowledge.

But the endurance of troubles must be borne by virtually all in this life who are striving toward the tree of life. The fullness of knowledge, however, seems to abound in only a few; so that not many who arrive at the tree of life come by fullness of knowledge, although all come through endurance of troubles ... But if we attend to what the Apostle says, 'The fullness of the law is charity' [Rom. 13.10]; and if we see that the same charity is contained in that two-fold precept: "'You shall love the Lord your God from you whole heart, from you whole soul, and from you whole mind"; and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself", on which two commands hang the whole of the law, and the prophets' [Mt. 22.37-40]; we understand without any doubt that one comes to the tree of life not only by way of the swinging sword of flame, that is by the endurance of temporal difficulties, but also through the fullness of knowledge, by charity. For [the Apostle] said 'If I have not charity, I am nothing' [1 Cor. 13.2].¹⁵³

Thus, at Thagaste, Augustine's increasing affinity to 'monastic' elements came together with his pursuit of the religious life to generate the paradigms of love as the motive and end of all action and of Christ's life as the prime moral example. The paradigm of love is often present in Augustine's writings from the period, but (as in *On the Morals* 33.73) the ideal of charity *in community* also begins to be emphasized. Speaking of the urban ascetic houses in Milan and Rome, he said,

Charity is guarded above all. Their eating, their speech, their appearance, their countenance, is all ordered by charity. Charity brings them together in one mind. To violate this [charity] is to conduct offense against God ... and [any such violator, person or practice] is immediately cast out ... They know that charity is so commended (esteemed) by Christ and the Apostles that if one lacks it alone all is empty, but if it be present all is full (*mor. ecc.* 33.73).¹⁵⁴

Significantly, charity is seen here as the basis of unity and life – both personal and communal. This is a precursor of the perspective that will mark Augustine's ecclesiology when he later argued with a Donatist conception of catholicity based

¹⁵² *Hic enim ostendit quam sint ad finem caritatis haec omnia dirigenda.* CSEL 90. 76. The charity paradigm continues in other writings from early Thagaste, e.g. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37 and *mor. ecc.* 33.73.

¹⁵³ *Nemo ergo potest peruenire ad arborem uitae, nisi per has duas, id est per tolerantiam molestiarum, et scientiae plenitudinem.*

Sed tolerantia molestiarum omnibus fere in hac uita subeunda est, tendentibus ad arborem uitae: plenitudo autem scientiae uidetur paucioribus prouenire; ut quasi non omnes qui perueniunt ad arborem uitae, per scientiae plenitudinem ueniant, quamuis omnes tolerantiam molestiarum, id est flammeam frameam uersatilem, sentiant. Sed si attendatur quod Apostolus dicit, 'Plenitudo autem Legis, caritas' (Rom. 13.10); et uideamus eandem charitatem praecepto illo gemino contineri, 'Diliges Dominum Deum unum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua'; et, 'Diliges proximum tanquam teipsum; in quibus duobus praeceptis tota Lex pendet, et Prophetarum' (Mt. 22.37-40): sine dubitatione intelligimus ad arborem uitae non solum per flammeam frameam uersatilem, id est per tolerantiam temporalium molestiarum, sed etiam per plenitudinem scientiae, id est per charitatem ueniri; quia 'si charitatem', inquit, 'non habeam, nihil sum' (1 Cor. 13.2). PL 34. 214-215.

¹⁵⁴ *Caritas praecipue custoditur; caritati uictus, caritati sermo, caritati habitus, caritati uultus aptatur; coitur in unam conspiraturque caritatem, hanc uiolare tanquam deum nefas ducitur; huic si quid resistit, expugnatur atque eicitur ... Sciunt hanc commendatam esse a Christo et apostolis, ut si haec una desit, inania, si haec adsit, plena sint omnia.* CSEL 90. 79.

primarily on holiness. Earlier he had noted, 'it is through love that we are conformed to God, and having been so conformed and fashioned by him and so separated (circumcised) from this world, we are no longer confounded by those things which ought to be subject to us' (*mor. ecc.* 13.23).¹⁵⁵ He further defined this love in *On the Morals* 14.24:

Therefore, we ought to love God the Trinity as a unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... For what else will be the best for man unless to cling to that which is greatest happiness? That is, to God alone, to whom we are certainly not able to cling save by affection, love, and charity.¹⁵⁶

The use of the paradigm of Christ as the Christian moral model (*cf. Gn. a. Man.* 1.8.14; 1.20.31)¹⁵⁷ is another noteworthy development: 'the spiritual person who is a good minister of Christ ... imitates him as well as he or she can' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.40).¹⁵⁸ In 83 *Questions*, an almost surprisingly exclusive focus on the morally exemplary Christ occurs when the purpose of the cross is summarized by Augustine saying that, 'The wisdom of God took on humanity in order to give us an example of how we ought to live' (*diu. qu.* 25).¹⁵⁹ The high moral standard of Christ was the ideal complement to the motivation of the love of God for Augustine's practice of personal spiritual life before God in the community of his friends.

Christ had become an object of theological (and even philosophical) synthesis for Augustine. This is illustrated by his discourse in *The Teacher*.¹⁶⁰ In the second chapter, Augustine incorporated scripture¹⁶¹ into this highly philosophical/intellectual discussion to emphasize the idea that the Holy Spirit and Christ both dwell within the Christian. He proceeded to ask Adeodatus, 'Where do you think the sacrifice of righteousness is to be offered unless in the temple of the mind and on the bed of the

¹⁵⁵ *Fiet ergo per caritatem ut conformemur deo et ex eo conformati atque figurati et circumcisi ab hoc mundo non confundamur cum his quae nobis debent esse subiecta.* CSEL 90. 27.

¹⁵⁶ *Deum ergo diligere debemus trinam quandam unitatem, patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum ... Nam quid erit aliud optimum hominis, nisi cui est haerere beatissimum? Id autem solus deus est, cui haerere certe non ualemus nisi dilectione, amore, caritate.* CSEL 90. 28-29.

¹⁵⁷ see also R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 22.

¹⁵⁸ *sic ista aetate spiritualis homo quicumque bonus minister est Christi, et eum bene quantum potest imitatur.* PL 34. 192.

¹⁵⁹ *Sapientia dei hominem ad exemplum quo recte uiueremus suscepit. Pertinet autem ad uitam rectam, ea quae non sunt metuenda non metuere.* CCL 44A. 31. This statement should be seen in relation to discussion of the virtues in *mor. ecc.* 15.25; *cf.* ch. 3 n. 92. Such conception of Christ may have had its origin for Augustine in the sermons of Ambrose, J.P. Burns, 'Ambrose Preaching to Augustine: The Shaping of Faith', *Collectanea Augustiniana* (1990), 375, 'As a spokesman for the life of philosophical asceticism, Christ urged humanity by teaching and example to despise temporal things and seek immortality. ... Ambrose may also have brought to his attention the scriptural witness to the human activity of Christ and role of his example in the salvation of humanity'.

¹⁶⁰ G. Madec, 'Analyse du «De Magistro»', *REA* 21 (1975), 63-71, is a good brief study of *mag.* and offers a helpful summary, by section, of its arguments (see esp. the 'Deuxième partie: Le Maître Intérieur' (covering § 38-46), p. 70).

¹⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 3.16 and Ephesians 3.17.

heart?' (*mag.* 1.2).¹⁶² In chapter 5.14, he referred to the high authority of scripture – 'our dearest authority'¹⁶³ in providing information about Christ, and stressed the role of meditation for reaching God. Later, he notes that God is truth – the One that they are seeking to encounter. He said to Adeodatus,

You will pardon, then, my prelude, which is not for the sake of playing, but for exercising our powers and sharpening our minds so that in the region of these things, where the happy life is, we should be able not only to withstand the heat and light but even to love it (*mag.* 8.21).¹⁶⁴

Thus, Christ is presented both as the one who enables the mind and heart of the Christian to come to God and as the representative of the truth and light of spiritual divinity. The importance of the indwelling Spirit of Christ was made manifest in the doctrine of the interior teacher.¹⁶⁵ In her discussion of this doctrine, Carol Harrison has linked the intellectual and spiritual elements of Augustine's discourse. She identifies the internal words (of contemplation) 'spoken' to God – the internal prayers, cries, etc. 'heard directly by God who dwells in the inner man' – as

an attempt at spiritualization, interiorization, and independence of the spirit or soul over against its bodily, mutable, temporal existence, so that it might better apprehend or sense God's external, immutable truth with that part of man which is closest to Him.¹⁶⁶

Augustine's Christian life at Thagaste was a construct of focused intellectual pursuit, aided by religious practices which together culminated in personal spiritual communion with God. In this construct, Christ was the teacher and the final object of learning; the goal of even the focused intellectual dialogue in *The Teacher* is 'to love God more ardently' (*mag.* 14.46).¹⁶⁷

ECCLESIOLOGICAL EXEGESIS

Augustine's emphasis on the reading and authority of scripture in the discussion of the communities he had observed in Rome is also apparent in his works from Thagaste. While this may be in partial imitation of the practice of ascetics, scriptural study was of

¹⁶² *Ubi putas sacrificium iustitiae sacrificari nisi in templo mentis et in cubilibus cordis? Ubi autem sacrificandum est, ibi et orandum.* CCL 29. 159.

¹⁶³ *Aug.* *Ergo, ut ea potissimum auctoritate utamur, quae nobis carissima est, cum ait Paulus apostolus: 'Non erat in Christo est et non, sed est in illo erat' [2 Cor. 1.19].* CCL 29. 172.

¹⁶⁴ *Dabis igitur ueniam, si praeludo tecum non ludendi gratia, sed exercendi uires et mentis aciem, quibus regionis illius, ubi beata uita est, calorem ac lucem non modo sustinere, uerum et amare possimus.* CCL 29. 180.

¹⁶⁵ *mag.* 11.38; 12.40; see C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 150-152.

¹⁶⁶ C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 150 (giving special reference to Augustine's *Io. eu. tr.* 38.8, 10 and 54.8).

¹⁶⁷ *quem [deus] iam fauente ipso tanto ardentius diligam, quanto ero in discendo prouectior.* CCL 29. 203; cf. *mag.* 14.45. See also, G. Madec, 'Analyse du «De Magistro»', *REA* 21 (1975), 64, 70-71; and G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 108.

clear importance to Augustine from his earliest Christian days.¹⁶⁸ At Thagaste, however, his interaction with scripture showed greater depth and sophistication¹⁶⁹ and contributed in its own right to his emerging theology, and particularly ecclesiology.¹⁷⁰ For example, in *On Genesis*, Augustine first interacted with the significant ecclesiological passage of Ephesians 5.21-33, as he attempted to elucidate the statement concerning marriage in Genesis 2.24:

It is written, 'A man will leave father and mother and he will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh'. I find no way in which this pertains to history ... but it is all prophecy. The Apostle reminds us, saying, 'Because of this a man will leave his father and mother and he will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament (mystery); I speak of Christ and the church' [Eph. 5.31-32] ... For the Apostle speaks thus, 'I have joined you to one husband to present you to Christ a chaste virgin' (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.13.19).¹⁷¹

Augustine referred again to this passage later in *On Genesis* (2.24.37). In this section he outlines a new direction for the discussion: 'In this discourse I promised to consider the works of creation [as history], which I think I have explained. Next, I promised to consider Genesis as prophecy, and this still remains for me to explain briefly'.¹⁷² It is under this rubric of 'Genesis as prophecy' that Augustine incorporated the church into

¹⁶⁸ cf. ch. 1, p. 12f. It has already been noted that scripture was presented as the basis of Augustine's Christian beliefs at Cassiciacum and that even as those beliefs came to be identified as the teachings of the church following his baptism, they were still consciously seen as being in agreement with scripture (cf. ch. 1, p. 12 and ch. 3, p. 74-75).

¹⁶⁹ *mor. Man.* 14.32 (cf. Appendix C n. 11 and p. 320) implies the regular practice at Thagaste of the reading and studying of scripture. The undertaking of an exposition of Genesis is ample enough evidence of Augustine's developing confidence with scripture and the seriousness of his biblical study. But at more specific levels his writings from the early Thagaste years show: greater biblical textual awareness (cf. 'manuscripts' comparison in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.5.9); awareness of other biblical interpreters (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.15.24); discussion of Greek and Hebrew terms (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.39; 2.9.12, and 2.10.13 – where he specifically refers to the issues of translation into Latin); and of hermeneutic methodology (i.e. carnal versus spiritual interpretation (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.22.33) and interpretations according to 'history' as distinct from those according to spiritual 'prophecy' (cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.2.3; 2.10.13)).

¹⁷⁰ W.S. Babcock, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans (A.D. 394-396)', *Aug. Stud.* 10 (1979), 58, has noted how it was only at Thagaste that Augustine's mature use of Paul and esp. of Romans began to emerge.

¹⁷¹ *Quod autem additum est, 'Relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae; et erunt duo in carne una,' quomodo referatur ad historiam non inuenio, nisi quod plerumque in genere humano ista contingunt; sed tota prophetia est, cuius Apostolus meminit, dicens: 'Propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae; et erunt duo in carne una. Sacramentum hoc magnum est; ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia' (Eph. 5.31, 32). ... Nam et Apostolus ita dicit: 'Aptau i uos uni uiro uirginem castam exhibere Christo' (2 Cor. 11.2) PL 34. 206.*

¹⁷² *Sed in hoc sermone pollicitus sum considerationem rerum factarum, quam puto explicatam: et deinde considerationem prophetiae, quae remanet explicanda iam breuiter.* PL 34. 215. R.J. Teske, in his translation (*FC* 84 (1991), 132 n. 162), notes that Augustine stated in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.2.3 that Genesis could be treated as both prophecy and history. Teske writes, 'The distinction seems to be between regarding Genesis as narrating past events and as foretelling future ones. That is, as history Genesis deals with Adam; as prophecy it deals with Christ. History and prophecy can both contain proper and figurative expressions'.

the meaning of the text.¹⁷³ This development – that of interpreting characters and references in the Old Testament as prefiguring the church and Christ – will continue and expand in Augustine's practice (especially in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, a collection compiled over many years and very important for understanding his ecclesiology).¹⁷⁴ Continuing in *On Genesis*, he wrote:

the Apostle says it is a great sacrament when it is written, 'Because of this a man will leave father and mother and will cling to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh' [Gen. 2.24]. Which passage is interpreted as follows: 'But I speak of Christ and the church' [Eph. 5.31-32]. Therefore, what was fulfilled as history in Adam, through prophecy signifies Christ, who left his Father, when he said, 'I went out from my Father and came into this world' [Jn. 16.28] ... He also left his mother, that is, the old and carnal observance of the synagogue, which was a mother to him from the seed of David according to the flesh, and he clung to his wife, that is, to the church, so that they might be two in one flesh. For the Apostle says that he [Christ] is the head of the church and the church is his body [cf. Col. 1.18]. Therefore, he too was put to sleep by the sleep of the passion so that the church might be formed as his wife. He sings of this sleep through the prophet, saying, 'I have fallen asleep and have slept; I have arisen, because the Lord has taken me up' [Ps. 3.6]. Therefore, a wife – the church – was formed for him, from his side, that is from the faith of the passion and baptism. For his side, having been pierced with the spear, poured out blood and water [Jn. 19.34] (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37).¹⁷⁵

This thoroughly ecclesial interpretation of Genesis 2.24 shows how comfortable Augustine had become in moving through the scriptures, linking one passage to another. Augustine's reference to Colossians 1.18 and the concept of the church as the body of Christ is particularly noteworthy. Clear as well is the figure of the synagogue and, earlier, the people of God in the Old Testament which were the 'church' of their

¹⁷³ during my initial research I inquired on the basis of several passages of Augustine's (including this one) into the possibility of early influence from Tyconius on Augustine. However, I have found no evidence that Augustine knew the work of the significant Donatist lay-theologian until c. 392 when possible early links to Tyconius might exist in *En. in Ps.* (e.g. *Ps.* 6 (cf. eschatological scope); *Ps.* 7 (cf. mystery, apocalyptic, dispensations, see 17.52); and *Ps.* 29.2). A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (1990 Diss. Southern Methodist Univ.), 257 n. 16, considers that 'Augustine had read Tyconius no later than 395-396'. In his study of 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans (A.D. 394-396)', *Aug. Stud.* 10 (1979), 55-74, W.S. Babcock concludes that Augustine's dependence on Tyconius for views on Romans during 394-396 is implausible (cf. esp. p. 67 and 73).

¹⁷⁴ see A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (1990), *passim*. It also recalls the type of ecclesial hermeneutic that Augustine had heard from Ambrose; cf. above ch. 3, p. 102f., although I have not discovered any direct appropriations from the bishop of Milan in Augustine's Thagaste exegesis.

¹⁷⁵ *Dicit enim Apostolus sacramentum magnum esse, quod dictum est, 'Propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae; et erunt duo in carne una': quod ipse interpretatur subiiciendo, 'Ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia' (Eph. 5.31, 32). Ergo quod per historiam impletum est in Adam, per prophetiam significat Christum, qui reliquit patrem, cum dixit: 'Ego a patre exiui, et ueni in hunc mundum' (Jn. 16.28). ... Item reliquit et matrem, id est Synagogae ueterem atque carnalem obseruationem, quae illi mater erat ex semine Dauid secundum carnem, et adhaesit uxori suae, id est Ecclesiae, ut sint duo in carne una. Dicit enim Apostolus ipsum esse caput Ecclesiae, et Ecclesiam corpus eius (Col. 1.18). Ergo et ipse soporatus est dormitione passionis, ut ei coniux Ecclesia formaretur, quam dormitionem cantat per prophetam dicens: 'Ego dormiui, et somnum cepi; et exurrexi, quoniam Dominus suscepit me' (Ps. 3.6). Formata est ergo ei coniux Ecclesia de latere eius, id est de fide passionis et Baptismi. Nam percussus latus eius lancea, sanguinem et aquam profudit (Jn. 19.34). PL 34. 215-216.*

times – continued in Augustine’s age (more perfectly) in the church of Christ. The centrality of Christ is evident, both as the result and purpose, ‘in the flesh’, of the mother synagogue¹⁷⁶ and as the bridegroom and body of the church of Augustine’s day.

At Thagaste, there were other ecclesial readings of the Old Testament as well. When discussing Eve and the serpent from Genesis 3, Augustine interpreted the lover of Canticles 4.12¹⁷⁷ as the church. ‘For God placed man in paradise in order that it might be worked and guarded. So the church is called in the Song of Songs, “An enclosed garden, a sealed spring”, where that persuader towards perversity is certainly not admitted’ (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.14.20).¹⁷⁸ Earlier in *On Genesis*, Augustine had introduced the idea of the church as the ‘field of God’, and he brought this concept into greater focus when he wrote, ‘People are taunted by the fruitless trees so that they should understand how embarrassed they ought be to be without the fruit of good works in the field of God, that is in the church’ (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.13.19).¹⁷⁹ Thus, his exegesis of these and other passages of Genesis reveals a growing theological focus on the church. This exegetical consideration, especially apparent in his new familiarity with scriptural passages like Colossians 1.18¹⁸⁰ on the church, encourages a consideration of the church as an object of theological speculation in Augustine’s early years at Thagaste.

THE CHURCH AS A THEOLOGICAL OBJECT

As seen in considering Augustine’s exegesis from the first year and a half (approximately) at Thagaste, the important theological idea of Christ as the head of the church appears during this period: ‘For the Apostle says that he is the head of the church and the church is his body’ (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37).¹⁸¹ Augustine also wrote, ‘Are you unaware that your bodies are members of Christ?’ (*mor. ecc.* 35.78).¹⁸² In

¹⁷⁶ Adam signifies Christ illustrating how, in Augustine’s eyes, many of the major Old Testament figures, events, and institutions pointed forward to, indeed led to, Christ and his bride, the church.

¹⁷⁷ ‘You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed frontier’.

¹⁷⁸ *Posuit enim Deus hominem in paradiso, ut operaretur et custodiret: quia sic de Ecclesia dicitur in Canticis canticorum, ‘Hortus conclusus, fons signatus’ (Cant. 4.12); quo utique non admittitur peruersitatis ille persuasor.* PL 34. 207.

¹⁷⁹ *Per infructuosas uero arbores insultatur hominibus, ut intelligant quam sit erubescendum sine fructu bonorum operum esse in agro Dei, hoc est in Ecclesia.* PL 34. 182.

¹⁸⁰ or Ephesians 5.31-32, cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.13.19. Augustine used Colossians in his Roman writings (see Appendix C, Table 18) and may have been struck earlier by this ecclesial passage which he first quotes at Thagaste. *Gn. a. Man.* does, however, give us a first glimpse into his meditations on biblical statements about the church.

¹⁸¹ *Dicit enim Apostolus ipsum esse caput Ecclesiae, ei Ecclesiam corpus eius (Col. 1.18).* PL 34. 216.

¹⁸² cf. 1 Cor. 6.12-7.7: *An nescitis quoniam corpora uestra membra Christi sunt?* CSEL 90. 84.

these passages Augustine made it clear that the church consists of those secured by Christ's work. In them, he also emphasized the idea that the members of Christ's body should be following his moral example: 'Doubtless no one would dare to understand by the washed and sanctified ones any save the faithful and those who have renounced the world' (*mor. ecc.* 35.78, in reference to 1 Cor. 6.11).¹⁸³ The powerful ecclesiological idea of the church as Christ's body, which was current in North Africa due to the slightly earlier Donatist theologian Tyconius (died c. 400), contained for Augustine especially the practical implication that the members of the church should be imitators of Christ.

Another significant ecclesiological theme which emerged in Augustine's writings in this period was that of the wheat and the tares.¹⁸⁴ At the end of *On the Morals*, Augustine wrote about those in the church who lived unbefitting Christ:

Those who with evil will persist in their past vices, or even add more serious (evils) than these former ones, will be permitted to be in the field of the Lord and to grow with the good seed; but the time will come when the tares will be separated out. Or if, because they are already called Christians, they are more to be considered among the chaff rather than of the thorns, still he will come who will purge the threshing floor, and will separate the chaff from the grain, and distribute to each part what is due according to the merit of each, by his perfect justice (*mor. ecc.* 34.76).¹⁸⁵

As mentioned, in *On Genesis*, Augustine referred to the church as the 'field of God' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.13.19).¹⁸⁶ Later (in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.3.4), Augustine explained,

In scripture it is customary for the world to be called a field in a figurative sense. For the Lord said, 'this field is the world' when he was explaining that parable where weeds were mixed in with the good seed [cf. Mt. 13.38]. Hence, the green of the field speaks of the spiritual and invisible creature.¹⁸⁷

Thus, Augustine saw the world as filled, throughout history, with those who were spiritual¹⁸⁸ and those who were non-spiritual.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, Augustine felt that the church was a mixed group of real Christians and merely professed Christians (in *mor.*

¹⁸³ *Ablutos procul dubio et sanctificatos nemo nisi fideles et eos qui huic mundo renuntiauerint, intelligere audebit.* CSEL 90. 83.

¹⁸⁴ see *mor. ecc.* 31.68, esp. *ad. fin.* where there appears to be an allusion to Mt. 13.24-30 (CSEL 90. 73 ln. 18); and 34.76-35.77.

¹⁸⁵ *Qui autem uoluntate mala in pristinis uitiiis perseuerant aut etiam addunt grauiora prioribus, in agro quidem domini sinuntur esse et cum bonis seminibus crescere, sed ueniet tempus quo zizania separentur. Aut si iam propter ipsum Christianum nomen magis in palea quam in spinis esse arbitrandi sunt, ueniet etiam qui aream purget, et a frumentis paleam separet et singulis partibus pro suo cuiusque merito quod oportet summa aequitate distribuat.* CSEL 90. 81-82.

¹⁸⁶ see n. 179 for Latin.

¹⁸⁷ *Ager enim solet in Scripturis figurate mundus appellari. Nam et ipse Dominus, 'Ager est hic', inquit, 'mundus' (Mt. 13.38), cum illam parabolam exponeret, ubi bono semini sunt commixta zizania. Viride ergo agri spiritualem atque inuisibilem creaturam dicit, propter uigorem uitae, et nomine pabuli utique propter uitam bene hoc ipsum interpretamur.* PL 34. 198.

¹⁸⁸ reborn by Christ into the 'spiritual Adam', cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.8.10 (see n. 88 above).

¹⁸⁹ or 'animals', trapped in sin away from God, cf. preceding note.

ecc. 34.76 he was speaking explicitly about the ‘Catholic church’). He seems to have connected his ideal of the Christian life as an imitation of Christ with a neo-Platonic understanding of the believer’s participation in the spiritual Christ. He understood the means (*i.e.* a holy life lived to God) as distinct from the end (*i.e.* participation in God). Moreover, he had come to an eschatological understanding that the ‘true’ members of Christ’s body – the wheat – will be known for certain only at the final judgment.¹⁹⁰ Significantly, Augustine had already molded his understanding of the church into a viewpoint which was opposed to the Donatist conception of the essential holiness of the church. No evidence exists to suggest Donatist influence as a causal factor in this development;¹⁹¹ but the understanding achieved is significant in its implication for the period following Augustine’s ordination, in which his struggle against the Donatists would focus largely on ecclesiological issues.

The eschatological understanding of the church in relation to future history and judgment, however, is only one part of a development in Augustine’s ecclesiological thought at Thagaste in which he began to think of the church in relation to the whole of human history and to the world. In chapter 23 of *On Genesis* (book 1), Augustine discussed the seven days of the creation narrative figuratively in terms of seven ages of the world. This important section shows the extent to which Augustine understood the church and Christianity in relation to history and the secular world surrounding. Already, at Thagaste, his thoughts evidence the kind of scope that will later emerge in the *City of God*.¹⁹²

The culmination of the first six ages of the world, as with the first six days, is the (eternal) rest of the seventh.¹⁹³ Elsewhere Augustine explained that ‘a brief image of the whole world from the beginning to the end is prefigured in these seven days’ (*Gn.*

¹⁹⁰ the biblical image of clearing the threshing floor, *cf.* Mt. 13.40-42.

¹⁹¹ nor yet any textual evidence of familiarity with them, though it would have been impossible to remain committed to the ‘Catholic’ church very long in North Africa or to have grown up in a Catholic family there and have remained ignorant of the dominant church in the province. Although no such indication is found in this period, from the later *ep.* 93.5.17 we learn that the Donatists were strong in Thagaste until later, when coercion was applied.

¹⁹² *cf.* R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 24-25. The idea of the church as present in the Old Testament scriptures had come to Augustine from Ambrose in 387, but this is the first occasion on which Augustine articulates an *understanding* of salvation-history (or the continuous history of Christianity – of God and his people in the world).

¹⁹³ *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.35: ‘I think that we should consider more carefully why this rest is attributed to the seventh day. For throughout the whole text of the divine scriptures I see that six work ages are, as it were, distinguished from one another by their limits so that in the seventh age rest is hoped for’ (*Sed quare septimo die requies ista tribuatur, diligentius considerandum arbitror. Uideo enim per totum textum diuinarum Scripturarum sex quasdam aetates operosas, certis quasi limitibus suis esse distinctas, ut in septima speretur requies.* PL 34. 190).

a. *Man.* 2.1.1).¹⁹⁴ This discussion of the seven ages reveals Augustine's first contemplation of the church in relation to history. The First Age, he wrote, was naturally marked by the

beginning of the human race, in which it began to enjoy [or 'make use of'] this light [the hope for the rest of the seventh age]. It is rightly compared with the first day [of creation] on which God created light. This age ought to be considered the infancy of the whole world ... because every person ... goes through infancy, the first age. This age stretched from Adam up to Noah over ten generations (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.35).¹⁹⁵

Thus, the First Age corresponded to the work of God in creation up through Noah. In *On Genesis* 1.23, Augustine said that he was speaking of each of the ages of God's work in scripture and not of the whole of humanity. Still, he did consider the ages of God's work as revealed in scripture to transcend and include the contemporaneous ages of world history (such as the period of the Babylonian empire, cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.39).

The 'morning' of the Second Age

begins with the time of Noah and extended up to Abraham over another ten generations. It is rightly compared with the second day [of creation] on which the sky was made between the waters,¹⁹⁶ because the ark ... was the expanse (sky) between the waters below, on which it floated, and the waters above, which rained upon it. The evening of this day is the confusion of languages among those who were building the tower [of Babel], and it became morning with Abraham. But this age did not generate the people of God; because childhood is not capable of reproducing (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.36).¹⁹⁷

Most significant here is the emergence of the concept of the 'people of God' – the generating of whom (those who will love God) is the purpose of the ages.

Augustine implied in his discussion of the Second Age that the Third Age would see the generation of the people of God and that in this Abraham would play a significant role. Augustine then followed immediately by noting that the Third Age began with Abraham and compared it with the third day of creation:

¹⁹⁴ R.J. Teske (*FC* 84 (1991), 83 n. 108) spells this out saying 'Augustine sees that the six days of [God's] work followed by a day of rest prefigures the whole of human history as it is sketched in the biblical ages'.

¹⁹⁵ *Primordia enim generis humani, in quibus ista luce frui coepit, bene comparantur primo diei quo fecit Deus lucem. Haec aetas tanquam infantia deputanda est ipsius universi saeculi ... quia unusquisque homo cum primo nascitur, et exit ad lucem, primam aetatem agit infantiam. Haec tenditur ab Adam usque ad Noe generationibus decem.* *PL* 34. 190.

¹⁹⁶ see *Gn. a. Man.* 1.11.17 on the spiritual meaning of the division of the waters by the firmament.

¹⁹⁷ *Et incipit mane a temporibus Noe secunda aetas tanquam pueritia, et tenditur haec aetas usque ad Abraham aliis generationibus decem. Et bene comparatur secundo diei quo factum est firmamentum inter aquam et aquam; quia et arca in qua erat Noe cum suis, firmamentum erat inter aquas inferiores in quibus natabat, et superiores quibus compluebatur ... Huius uespera est confusio linguarum in eis qui turrem faciebant, et fit mane ab Abraham. Sed nec ista aetas secunda generavit populum Dei, quia nec pueritia apta est ad generandum.* *PL* 34. 190-191.

on which the land was separated from the waters. The word 'sea' rightly signifies the nations with their shifting error and empty doctrines of idolatry ... From that vanity of the nations and from the waves of this world the people of God were separated through Abraham, like the land, when it appeared as dry, that is, thirsting for the heavenly rain of the divine commandments. By worshipping the one God, this people received the holy scriptures and the prophets like a land irrigated ... For this age could now generate a people for God, because the third age, that is adolescence, is able to bear children ... This age stretched from Abraham to David over fourteen generations. Its evening is the sins of the people, in which they disregarded the divine commands, up to the wickedness of the evil king, Saul (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.37).¹⁹⁸

This age, from Abraham to David, according to the Old Testament, did generate the people of God, Israel. It is interesting to note the activities of the people of Israel recounted here: they are separated from the world, they thirst for scripture, are blessed with revelation, and worship the one God. For Augustine, these were aspects of the 'people of God' in any age.

Continuing, Augustine proceeded to describe the Fourth Age as the 'age of youth'.

For youth rules all the ages ... It is rightly compared with the fourth day, on which the heavenly bodies were made in the expanse of heaven ... The perfection of the sun signifies the splendor of a kingdom ... the moon signifies the people – like the synagogue – obedient to the kingdom, and the stars signify its leaders ... The evening of this day is in the sins of the kings, in which all the people acquired [the penalty of] captivity and slavery (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.38).¹⁹⁹

Significant here is the fact that the sins of the people which ended the Third Age did not hinder the arrival of the golden age of the kingdom (the Fourth Age, the age of youth). Yet, in the Fourth Age, the sins of the leaders of the people denote its hopeless corruption and merit national exile. Also significant is the mention of the synagogue, seen elsewhere in *On Genesis* as a carnal precursor of the church.²⁰⁰ Here, however, the people of Israel and the synagogue are shown in their originally good state, operating in ordered fashion of obedience to the rulers which God had established.²⁰¹

In discussing the Fifth Age, Augustine continued:

¹⁹⁸ *Et bene comparatur diei tertio, quo ab aquis terra separata est. Ab omnibus enim gentibus, quarum error instabilis et uanis simulacrorum doctrinis tanquam uentis omnibus mobilis, maris nomine bene significatur; ab hac ergo gentium uanitate et huius saeculi fluctibus separatus est populus Dei per Abraham, tanquam terra cum apparuit arida, id est, sitiens imbrem coelestem diuinorum mandatorum: qui populus unum Deum colendo, tanquam irrigata terra ... sanctas Scripturas et Prophetias accepit. Haec enim aetas potuit iam generare populum Deo, quia et tertia aetas, id est adolescentia filios habere iam potest ... (Gen. 17.5-8) ... Haec aetas porrigitur ab Abraham usque ad David quatuordecim generationibus. Huius uespera est in populi peccatis, quibus diuina mandata praeteribant, usque ad malitiam pessimi regis Saul. PL 34. 191.*

¹⁹⁹ *Et reuera inter omnes aetates regnat iuuentus ... et ideo bene comparatur quarto diei, quo facta sunt sidera in firmamento coeli. Quid enim euidentius significat splendorem regni, quam solis excellentia? Et plebem obtemperantem regno splendor lunae ostendit, tanquam synagogam ipsam, et stellae principes eius, et omnia tanquam in firmamento in regni stabilitate fundata. Huius quasi uespera est in peccatis regum, quibus illa gens meruit captiuari atque seruire. PL 34. 191.*

²⁰⁰ cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37. Another aspect which may go back to Ambrose (cf. e.g. *Iacob* 2.3.10 and *exam.* 4.5.22).

²⁰¹ still, the sins of these leaders and the people after them (which mark the end, or evening, of the Fourth Age) led to the penalty of captivity (the decline of youth). Augustine judged that the Jewish system was, by the time of Christ, a failed and corrupt one; cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.39 *ad fin.*

This age dawned with the exile into Babylon, when in captivity the people hardly found rest as foreigners.²⁰² This age extended up to the advent of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is the fifth age, the decline from youth to old age, but not old age ... then the people began to live among the nations ... and to have no certain and fixed place, like the migrating birds. Clearly, in that exile there were still the great sea animals – the great men ... whom no terror could reduce to the worshipping of idols ... The evening of this day, that is, of this age, was the multiplication of sins among the people of the Jews, because they were blind [by sin] to such an extent that they could not recognize even the Lord Jesus Christ (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.39).²⁰³

Here, Augustine pointed out the alienation of the Jews as well as the great difficulty which the people of God encounter when they are forced to live among the nations.

Finally, Augustine addressed the Sixth Age, the last of the worldly ages. He wrote:

But morning dawned with the preaching of the gospel through our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the fifth day was finished. Thus begins the sixth, in which the old age of the old man appears. For in this age that carnal kingdom was violently crushed, when the temple was desecrated and the sacrifices ceased ... But in this age, ... a new man is born and now lives spiritually. For God said concerning the sixth day: 'Let the earth produce the living soul' [*cf.* Gen. 1.24]. For up to this point ... the people were serving the law with bodily circumcision and sacrifice, as in the sea of nations ... [On that sixth day] man was made in the image and likeness of God, just as in the sixth age Christ, our Lord, was born in the flesh ... on that day there were male and female, just as in this age there are Christ and the church ... on that day man was placed over cattle ... just as in this age Christ rules over those souls obedient to him, who have come to his church in part from the Gentiles and in part from the Jews ... in this age the spiritual man who is a good minister of Christ and imitates him as well as he can, feeds spiritually with the people on the foods of the holy scripture and the divine law. Partly for comprehending the abundance of ideas and words, which like seed grains are useful partly for [improving] his moral conduct of life in human interaction [society], ... and partly to strengthen faith, hope, and charity for eternal life ... The spiritual man is fed by those foods so that he understand many things; the carnal man, however, that is the little ones in Christ, like God's cattle are fed so that they believe many things that they cannot understand. Still, all of them receive the same food (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.40).²⁰⁴

²⁰² the Latin *leniter* here would normally read 'found gentle rest' but this is, as Teske (*FC* 84 (1991), 85 n. 110) points out, contrary to the sense of the passage and to history.

²⁰³ *Et fit mane transmigratio in Babyloniam, cum in ea captiuitate populus leniter in peregrino otio collocatus est. Et porrigitur haec aetas usque ad aduentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, id est quinta aetas, scilicet declinatio a iuuentute ad senectutem, nondum senectus ... posteaquam illi homines inter gentes, tanquam in mari, uiuere coeperunt, et habere incertam sedem et instabilem, sicut uolantes aues. Sed plane erant ibi etiam ceti magni, id est illi magni homines qui magis dominari fluctibus saeculi, quam seruire in illa captiuitate potuerunt. Non enim ad cultum idolorum aliquo terrore deprauati sunt. ... Huius diei, hoc est huius aetatis, quasi uespera est multiplicatio peccatorum in populo Iudaeorum, quia sic excaecati sunt, ut etiam Dominum Jesum Christum non possent agnoscere. PL 34. 191-192.*

²⁰⁴ *Mane autem fit ex praedicatione Evang. per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, et finitur dies quintus: incipit sextus, in quo senectus ueteris hominis apparet. Hac enim aetate illud carnale regnum uehementer attritum est, quando et templum deiectum est, et sacrificia ipsa cessauerunt ... In ista tamen aetate tanquam in senectute ueteris hominis, homo nouus nascitur, qui iam spiritualiter uiuit. Sexta enim die dictum erat: 'Producat terra animam uiuam'. Nam ... et adhuc corporali circumcisione et sacrificiis tanquam in mari Gentium populus ille seruiebat Legi. ... Tunc fit homo ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei, sicut in ista sexta aetate nascitur in carne Dominus noster ... Et quemadmodum in illo die masculus et femina, sic et in ista aetate Christus et Ecclesia. Et praeponitur homo in illo die pecoribus et serpentibus et uolatilibus coeli, sicut in ista aetate Christus regit animas obtemperantes sibi, quae ad Ecclesiam eius, partim de Gentibus, partim de populo Iudaeorum uenerunt ... sic ista aetate spiritualis homo quicumque bonus minister est Christi, et eum bene quantum potest imitatur, cum ipso populo spiritualiter pascitur sanctarum Scripturarum alimentis et lege diuina partim ad*

It was in the Sixth Age that Augustine was writing. It could be called, in a sense, the 'Age of Christ and the Church', for in it (according to Augustine) God had introduced an entirely new structure to define his people in the world. God's people now included those from the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The carnal structures of 'bodily circumcision and sacrifice' had yielded to a spiritual manner of worship in which believers offered themselves spiritually (*cf.* Rom. 12.1), internally interacting with the ideas and teaching of the church so as to live seeking understanding, motivated by love, faith, and hope.²⁰⁵ However, the ecclesial change of this age was not absolute. Structurally, it was absolute in that the church was now understood as the new 'nation' of the people of God;²⁰⁶ but among God's people, there were still those in the Sixth Age who were carnal, living and worshipping in the church 'carnally' as 'little ones'. Augustine believed that the carnal person was able, like the spiritual, to live a spiritual life in *action*,²⁰⁷ without being directly involved in the world of the ideas of the church or in spiritual understanding.²⁰⁸ The integration of spiritual understanding with this life escaped them (*i.e.* the motivation to paradise which Augustine has, the point of spiritual living). Yet, the 'spiritual' person has the same food as the 'animal or carnal' person in the church. The difference exists not in the doctrine taught to the two groups (indeed there was no visible separation of the carnal and spiritual) but in their ability to grasp what is given them. Thus, the spirituals understand many things which the 'little ones' in Christ have to believe yet not understand. The latter's involvement in and experience of the spiritual community was vicarious in a sense, through belief in, not understanding of or actual exposure to spiritual realities. Finally, the ideal of a spiritual life, imitating Christ and being a minister of some sort for him, was reiterated in summary form in this passage. Augustine emphasized the individual feeding upon Christian scriptures and divine laws leading to individual understanding among the activities of Christ's emulators. These central aspects have already been noted of Augustine and the Thagaste community. It is interesting that they also do not require

concupiscendam fecunditatem rationum atque sermonum, tanquam herbis seminalibus; partim ad utilitatem morum conversationis humanae, tanquam lignis fructiferis; partim ad uigorem fidei, spei et charitatis in uitam aeternam ... Sed spiritualis sic istis alimentis pascitur, ut multa intelligat; carnalis autem, id est paruulus in Christo, tanquam pecus Dei, ut multa credat quae intelligere nondum potest: tamen eosdem cibos omnes habent. PL 34. 192-193.

²⁰⁵ this may hint at an explanation for Augustine's seeming lack of involvement in Catholic ritual observance at Thagaste (or Rome). Such things are good, maybe even necessary on occasion, but are still worldly manifestations of spiritual reality. As has been noted in preceding chapters, Augustine saw his spiritual life before God as spiritual cult and worship.

²⁰⁶ the implication is that the ethnic dependence and the special locus of divinity and supporting laws of the Old Testament community were superseded in the church of Augustine's age.

²⁰⁷ *cf.* Gn. a. Man. 1.3.6; 2.22.35-36.

²⁰⁸ clearly, 'carnal' does not necessarily carry a pejorative sense in Augustine in his early Thagaste writings (*cf.* Gn. a. Man. 1.19.30).

regular, direct contact with the organized church. Although Augustine spoke of all believers (whether carnal or spiritual) under the heading of the church in his discussion of the Sixth Age, he did not specify required forms or structures of involvement in the church. The image created is of a group of believing individuals moving forward in the spiritual life within the overarching spiritual construct of Christ's church (body). Augustine concluded his discussions with the Seventh Age saying, 'After this [Sixth Age], the morning will come, when the Lord himself will come in glory. Then they will rest in Christ from all their works, to whom he said, "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect"' (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.41).²⁰⁹

Another example of Augustine's understanding of the people of God in history (recounted but not explained) is found in *On the Morals* (7.12). Augustine spoke of how great God's providence is and about how the Christian can understand the greatness of God's provision or understand the spiritual truth which they seek,

only if we begin with things human and familiar to us and through faith in the true religion and the keeping of the commandments, and proceed without forsaking the path he had prepared for us by the appointment of the patriarchs, the bond of the law, the predictions of the prophets, the mystery of the incarnation, the testimony of the Apostles, the blood of the martyrs, and the conversion of the gentiles. Let no one, then ask for my opinion, but may we all listen to the divine announcements of the authority and submit our frail reasonings to them (*mor. ecc.* 7.12).²¹⁰

Augustine, as a Catholic Christian through faith in 'true religion', saw himself in the line of God's people extending completely through history. Following the discussion of the seven ages, Augustine gave an interesting analogy between the days of creation and the stages in the life of a believer.²¹¹ This second analogy of the days clarifies

²⁰⁹ *Post istam uesperam fiet mane, cum ipse Dominus in claritate uenturus est: tunc requiescent cum Christo ab omnibus operibus suis ii quibus dictum est, 'Estote perfecti, sicut Pater uester qui in caelis est' (Mt. 5.48). PL 34. 193.*

²¹⁰ *Quod quidem quam sit pulchrum, quam magnum, quam deo dignum, quam postremo id quod quaeritur uerum, nequaquam intelligere poterimus nisi ab humanis et proximis incipientes. Uerae religionis fide praeceptisque seruatis non deseruerimus uiam quam nobis deus et patriarcharum segregatione et legis uinculo et prophetarum praesagio et suscepti hominis sacramento et apostolorum testimonio et martyrum sanguine et gentium occupatione muniuit. Quare deinceps nemo ex me quaerat sententiam meam, sed potius audiamus oracula nostrasque ratiunculas diuinis submittamus affatibus. CSEL 90. 14-15.*

²¹¹ see *Gn. a. Man.* 1.25.43 where Augustine essentially traced the ideal development of the spiritual person in seven stages: 1. the light of faith brings belief in visible things (that this is the first step is why God descended to appear visibly) (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 2-5); 2. one reaches the region ('firmament') of learning which then allows the identification of the spiritual as distinct from things carnal (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 5-7); 3. the mind is separated from the temptations and impurity of carnal things. Good works become possible in this stage, as does the conscious struggle between the 'law of the mind' and the 'law of the flesh' (cf. Rom. 7.25) (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 7-12) – Augustine illuminated what this might mean when, speaking later (2.19.29) of the curse of pain in childbirth in Genesis 3.16, he said, 'what can this mean except that, when that part of the soul held by carnal joys has, in willing to conquer a bad habit, suffered difficulty and pain and in this way brought forth a good habit, it now more carefully and diligently obeys reason as its husband? And, taught by its pains, it turns to reason and willingly obeys its commands lest it again decline to some harmful habit. Hence those things which seemed to be curses are commandments, if we do not read those spiritual things in a carnal way.

how Augustine fitted himself into the grand picture he had just described in the seven ages. Of particular interest is his statement that, 'the (believer) begins on the fifth day to take part in the actions of this very turbulent world ... in order to benefit the *society of his brothers*' (italics mine, *Gn. a. Man.* 1.25.43).²¹² Just because Augustine had come to see the church in the perspective of all history did not mean that the church of his day was at all diminished. Indeed, for Augustine, the determination that the love of God which culminated in the Sixth Age of Christ and his church should be made manifest would have inspired his commitment to live united in charity with the rest of the members of the church.

In line with the idea of the church as united over time in God's plan of salvation and over space in charity, one other element which developed a new dimension at Thagaste was that of the church *Catholic*. In many places Augustine wrote about the greatness of the Catholic church in terms of the great number of those within it. In the last five chapters of *On the Morals*, Augustine repeatedly referred to the 'multitudes' in the church²¹³ as well as to the great geographic dispersion of the church. This aspect would affect his later ecclesiological arguments with the Donatists. Augustine could not understand how they could consider themselves the only true church, thus cutting off the 'Catholics' of Italy, Gaul, and the eastern part of the empire.²¹⁴ Also, the Catholic church was (in Augustine's eyes) united in its essential teaching, and its teaching (granted by God) was one of its greatest distinctives. Finally, at Thagaste, Augustine²¹⁵ understood the term Catholic in the sense of unity in charity which confirms unity in instruction/institution (*i.e.* its authority).²¹⁶ Thus, the understanding of the term Catholic, with its various nuances, fundamentally provided Augustine with

For the law is spiritual' (cf. Rom. 7.14; translation taken from R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 124; see *PL* 34. 211 l. 15-28); 4. one comes to understand the layout of the spiritual universe which is now inhabited (*i.e.* identifying various 'spiritual knowledges', witnessing the brilliance of immutable truth, understanding how the soul absorbs this truth and is thus able to order the body, etc.) (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 12-20); 5. with the strength that has come by the previous stage of spiritual awareness one enters into participation in the 'actions of this very turbulent world ... in order to benefit the society of his brothers'. This includes actions of the body which pertain to the life on earth 'works that profit living souls', deeds which demonstrate independence from (and certainly control over) the 'waves of this world', and words which communicate the things of divinity (*PL* 34. 194 l. 20-29); 6. one lives constantly producing the 'spiritual offspring' in the world which began to emerge in the previous stage, perfectly subjugating the flesh and controlling the thoughts of the mind in almost perfect attention to spiritual realities and doing good works (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 30-39); and 7. 'after the very good works of these six days let man hope for perpetual rest and understand what it is that "God rested on the seventh day from all his works"' (see *PL* 34. 194 l. 39f.). The discussion in this passage harkens back to the seven stages of the ascent of the soul in *quant.* 33.70-77.

²¹² *Quarum rerum notitia fortior effectus incipiat quinto die in actionibus turbulentissimi saeculi, tanquam in aquis maris operari, propter utilitatem fraternae societatis.* *PL* 34. 194.

²¹³ e.g. *mor. ecc.* 30.64-35.80 (esp. 35.77) and *mor. Man.* 20.74.

²¹⁴ e.g. *En. in Ps.* 95.11; cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 208, 221, and 231.

²¹⁵ perhaps as early as the beginning of 388, but almost certainly by late 388 at Thagaste.

²¹⁶ *mor. ecc.* 33.73.

a designation that represented the church's unity, a unity necessitated by charity and which confirmed the authority of the church by its extension, in time and space, and the truth of its teaching.

CONCLUSION

After his arrival back in North Africa in 388, Augustine's understanding of the church continued to extend. He had come to think of the church as important following his baptism in Milan almost two years earlier. Now, as he finally settled in 388-389, he was able to begin incorporating the ecclesial (and broader Christian) information he had seen and heard in Italy. At Thagaste, he continued to develop a lifestyle which was 'within the church' though not directly within any official structure. Though he wrote as a teacher in the church, he wrote as one of the spirituals aloof from the clergy and the average congregational member and from the many ignorant 'little' ones of the Catholic communion. Yet, his teaching reflected a commitment to charity as the center of his relationship with God and with the church as the communion of shared charity between all believers. He wrote for the benefit of the church, to increase its number and to educate and defend its adherents. As he operated within the general framework of the 'church', and as he sought to grow in the understanding of Catholic scriptures and teaching, Augustine was able to think about the implications of the scriptural ideas of the church which he encountered on a basic level. Already the scope of his thinking on the church that will appear in the *City of God* emerged; already the doctrine of the wheat and the tares with its eschatological and ecclesiastical implications²¹⁷ appeared; already Augustine has grasped the idea of the church as the body of Christ and has begun to work out the various implications of this truth²¹⁸ actively, in his philosophical and moral writings. In addition, Augustine has begun to engage in ecclesial interpretation of Old Testament figures and passages. Finally, in practice, he adopted an ascetic lifestyle within a unique Christian community at Thagaste and saw himself as a minister/servant of God. The crucial development which remained at Thagaste was the process of codification of all these new developments. Over the next year and a half such codification would occur and Augustine's community involvement would become more clear. Augustine would gradually come to what could be called his first ecclesiological synthesis and in its manifestations it will be a monastic one.

²¹⁷ e.g. creating a paradigm from which to identify divisions both within humanity and within the church.

²¹⁸ e.g. that all true Christians should imitate Christ, or that his 'body' the church was principally a spiritual, not an organizational, communion.

EXCURSUS: THE 'MONASTIC' NATURE OF THE THAGASTE COMMUNITY

Augustine's writings and activities at Thagaste from 388 to 391 encourage an approach that analyzes and traces him and his community as changing (or developing) objects. The Thagaste period must not be treated as a monolithic whole. In many ways, the two and a half years Augustine spent there witness more progress in his thought and way of life than the years in Italy (384-388). The *changes* in thought and lifestyle and the exposure to new ideas were more severe in Milan and Rome, but in retrospect they were more straightforward than the greater developments at Thagaste.²¹⁹ The centrality of the ascetic/'monastic'²²⁰ aspect of Augustine's ecclesiological progress to the discussion and the conclusions drawn in this chapter and the next highlight the need to address the debate in recent years over the specific issue of Augustine's communal surroundings, that is, over the 'monastic' nature of the Thagaste community.²²¹ In this excursus, comments will be made on the arguments that have been put forward for a 'monastery' at Thagaste, and the model for understanding Augustine's 'monastic' tendencies at Thagaste during the interval 388-391 will be further outlined and developed.²²²

Since the middle of this century, a number of scholars have contributed to the discussion over the nature of the Thagaste community of which Augustine was part.²²³ Probably the most significant recent contributions have been made by: A. Zumkeller,

²¹⁹ e.g. in biblical or ecclesial understanding. *De uera religione*, the synthesis of Augustine's early Christianity, would not have been possible at Rome. It was the product of Augustine's considerable reflection and Christian development at Thagaste (see ch. 5).

²²⁰ it is well known that Augustine does not begin to use the term '*monasterium*' (or '*monachus*') until 396, in *ep.* 36 (cf. J.K. Coyle, "'Monastic' Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*", *SP* 16 (1985), 499; contra Lawless '[*monasterium*] appears for the first time mid-way through *De opere monachorum*' ('An Augustinian Glossary of Monastic Terms', *Homo Spiritualis: Festgabe für Luc Verheijen OSA zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (1987, C. Mayer, ed.), 278), a work which Perler dates to the year 401 (*Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 444-445)). And Coyle has argued persuasively that the reason Augustine did not use these terms is that he used the terminology current in the ascetic communities which he learned about at Rome and Milan to describe the communal ascetic life in this period (e.g. when he uses terms such as *diuersorium*, *fratres*, *uiri* in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 1.30.62f. though he knew of '*monachus/monasterium*'; see "'Monastic' Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*", *SP* 16 (1985), 497-500, esp. 499). Hence, the terms 'monastery' or 'monastic' are used in quotes where they are referring to known or alleged organized ascetic communities in Augustine's purview before January 391 (the date which Perler (p. 434) assigns to Augustine's ordination as presbyter at Hippo).

²²¹ throughout the main discussion of the thesis the principal concern has been to consider and elucidate Augustine's personal movements as derived from his own texts of the period, bringing other works and secondary literature to bear only afterward. Hence, the treatment of this topic as something of a parenthesis within the text.

²²² which model is presented in the main sections of chapters four and five. In the following chapter especially, I have drawn out a framework based primarily on the textual evidence in *mus.* and *uera rel.* for Augustine's ascetic and indeed 'monastic' development at Thagaste.

²²³ A. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (1968), 200-209, has given a review of the general discussion. To the following list should certainly be added G. Folliet, 'Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 25-44 (esp. 36-42), to whose perceptive arguments I will return in ch. 5.

Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life (1986);²²⁴ G.P. Lawless, following along lines drawn earlier by Zumkeller, in his *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (1986);²²⁵ R. Halliburton, in 'The Inclination to Retirement – the Retreat of Cassiciacum and the "Monastery" at Tagaste' (1962);²²⁶ and by the shorter comments of P. Brown, J.K. Coyle, E. Portalié, C. Stancliffe, E. TeSelle, L.J. Van der Lof, and L. Verheijen.²²⁷ Among these scholars (and others such as G. Bonner, W.H.C. Frend, and F. Van der Meer who make fairly precise pronouncements about the community) there seem to be roughly three perspectives.²²⁸ The first view considers the community at Thagaste to be a monastery (Lawless, Zumkeller, Frend, Portalié, Van der Meer), though this view is somewhat ambiguous whether Augustine 'founded' this monastery. The second view considers the community not to be a 'monastery' as such (or would accept a 'monastery' only late at Thagaste, and in any case with caution and qualifications) but a community with 'monastic' elements, a 'pseudo-monastery' or 'monastic like' community (Bonner, Brown, Verheijen). The third view considers Augustine's company primarily as a Christian philosophic community – though not necessarily without ascetic elements, and in its strong form considers Thagaste as a fairly direct extension of the Cassiciacum community (Halliburton, Stancliffe, Van der Lof).²²⁹

The arguments lying behind each of these perspectives find a place in an accurate understanding (of the nature) of Augustine's ascetic and 'monastic' *development* during the Thagaste period. Yet, Augustine probably never founded a 'monastery' at Thagaste; and while no certain conclusion is possible, the most likely case is that the

²²⁴ translated from A. Zumkeller, *Das Mönchtum des heiligen Augustinus* (1968); see esp. p. 24-32 and 57-58.

²²⁵ esp. p. 45-58. Several valuable comments and observations can also be found in Lawless' review of Augustine's monastic terminology in his article 'An Augustinian Glossary of Monastic Terms', *Homo Spiritualis* (1987), 276-294.

²²⁶ in *SP* 5 (1962), 329-340.

²²⁷ cf. P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 132-137; J.K. Coyle, "'Monastic" Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*', *SP* 16 (1985), 497-500 (as well as his comments in *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 70-71, 406, and *passim*); E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 123, 130-132; E. Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine* (1960), 19-20; L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in the Writings of Saint Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 46-52, 54-57; C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (1983), 29f.; and L. Verheijen, *St. Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts* 4.32-35, *St. Augustine Lecture* 1975 (1979), 40-47.

²²⁸ the three descriptions which follow are for the most part a restatement of the three views Lawless summarizes in *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1986), 45 (*i.e.* the view that any concrete statements about the nature of the community are 'hard to prove'; the 'middle position' of Thagaste as 'a "half-way" house between Cassiciacum and Hippo'; and his view which recognizes 'Thagaste ... as a monastery').

²²⁹ cf. G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1986), 45-46.

Thagaste community was not recognized formally²³⁰ as a ‘monastery’ before Augustine left on his journey to Hippo.²³¹ The community probably initially resulted from much the same impetus that had led to the Cassiciacum retreat, but now the motivation was augmented by the knowledge and observation of ascetic and ‘monastic’ communities at Rome.²³² Hence, those who stress continuity with Cassiciacum are correct that continuity exists, but it is a line of continuity now surrounded by other new and significant strands (especially those pertaining to organized asceticism and ‘monasticism’).²³³ Over the course of time, as Augustine’s own understanding and pursuit of ‘true religion’ crystallized, elements of a communal (and personal) religious framework began to precipitate out of the normal daily activities of the community.²³⁴ By late 390 or early 391, this framework, emerging both from Augustine’s personal and vocational direction and out of the daily practice of life in the community, increasingly approximated in many (but not all) respects the ascetic and ‘monastic’ communities of which he was already aware.²³⁵ Despite similarities to these other institutions or organized groups, however, the Thagaste community was kept from being so designated and explicitly organized/regularized (*i.e.* ‘founded’) by the combined factors of Augustine’s own apprehension of taking the official position of responsibility in a ‘monastery’ (corresponding to the leaders of these other communities)²³⁶ and the fact that the development of the Thagaste community was gradual.²³⁷ In late 390 or in 391, Augustine’s ecclesiological thinking finally

²³⁰ by ‘not formally recognized’ I mean that the Thagaste community was not referred to with a known institutional name (whatever the common word for a ‘monastery’ or ‘monastic’ community would have been at that place and time; *e.g.* ‘*monasterium*’ or, more likely, ‘*diuersorium*’ (*cf. mor. ecc.* 33.70)) and that the community members were not seen by themselves or others as bound in any sense of an official membership commitment to the community. I do not mean that the community was incoherent or that it might not have been increasingly recognized, even well beyond Thagaste, as a ‘Christian community’, *i.e.* as comprised of Christian individuals living together, pursuing the religious life, and to some degree, ascetic.

²³¹ in fact, neither Halliburton (‘The Inclination to Retirement – the Retreat of Cassiciacum and the “Monastery” at Tagaste’, *SP* 5 (1962), 339) nor Van der Lof (‘The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine’, *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 54) think that the Thagaste community ought to be identified with the *monasterium* that Paulinus (*ep.* 3 = *Aug. ep.* 24.2.6) referred to in Thagaste in 394 – there is no explicit link in the sources (though some kind of connection, if not identity, between these two groups should be envisaged).

²³² *cf. mor. ecc.* 1.31.65f.

²³³ A. Zumkeller, *Augustine’s ... Religious Life* (1986), 24–25.

²³⁴ *e.g.* Augustine’s transition, seen in works like *diu. qu.*, from being a Christian author, discussion leader, and sort of Christian expert on philosophy, to the role of one to whom the community, and others in Africa, regularly addressed religious/philosophic questions. It is significant that among the questions which are addressed to Augustine in the Thagaste portion of *diu. qu.* (questions c. 1–50) there is an almost total lack of questions that deal with communal or ‘monastic’ issues, although there is an increase in more specifically Christian questions during the period.

²³⁵ see esp. *mor. ecc.* 1.31.65–1.33.73.

²³⁶ even in late 390/early 391 Augustine was very wary of official temptations as a hindrance (through pride) to the spiritual happy life (*cf. diu. qu.* 36.3 and ch. 5 below).

transcended the barriers that had kept him from actively establishing a recognized community or organized monastic house, and he determined to ‘found a monastery’ (s. 355.1.2).²³⁸ It is not clear whether Augustine thought the Thagaste community could be the basis for this ‘monastery’ or whether he felt that it would be preferable to make a clean break and begin the new monastery on the ‘clean slate’ of a new location.²³⁹ In the end, the events which transpired at Hippo shortly after Augustine’s arrival constrained him to put his new initiative into practice there.

‘*Servi Dei*’ and Augustine’s Return to North Africa

The idea of Augustine and his companions as ‘servants of God’ often has been exploited in discussions of Augustine’s early ‘monasticism’ (and his Christian development generally).²⁴⁰ Yet, the phrase ‘*seruus/serui dei*’ does not appear in Augustine’s corpus until *ep.* 20.2 in 391, shortly before the trip to Hippo.²⁴¹ The

²³⁷ *i.e.* since the increasing similarity to established/recognized ascetic communities was gradual, the need for a founding action did not necessarily arise.

²³⁸ see note following and *cf. uita Aug.* 5. It is argued below in ch. 5 on the basis of his first overall Christian religious synthesis, found in *uera rel.*, that Augustine achieved within this overarching framework an ecclesiological synthesis that was (in its tangible manifestations) essentially ‘monastic’. This synthesis then, was the driving force for Augustine’s journey to Hippo for the purpose of recruitment and monastic foundation.

²³⁹ I lean toward the latter option. Augustine’s statement of coming to Hippo ‘seeking [the place] where I should establish a monastery and live with my brothers’ in s. 355.2 (*Ego, quem Deo propitio uidetis episcopum uestrum, iuuenis ueni ad istam ciuitatem, ut multi uestrum nouerunt. Quaerebam ubi constituerem monasterium, et uiuerem cum fratribus meis.* PL 39. 1569) and Possidius’ explicit description of the community of ‘servants of God’ at Hippo as a ‘monastery’ (*monasterium*) in *uita Aug.* 5, in distinction to the more vague description of living together ‘with others who clung to God’ (*cum his qui eidem adhaerebant Deo uiuebat*) at Thagaste in *uita Aug.* 3, suggest that there were differences between these two communities and between their recognized natures. See ch. 5, p. 240–245 for further discussion (esp. of the trip to Hippo) and *cf. G. Folliet, ‘Aux origines de l’ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain’, Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 42 esp. n. 69.

²⁴⁰ *e.g.* P. Brown’s chapter 13, ‘*Servus Dei: Thagaste*’, in *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 132–137.

²⁴¹ *seruos dei* (twice); for date see CSEL 58.2. 12–13; for Latin text see n. 249 below. This appears to be the only such nominal usage in the period before the journey to Hippo (I have searched through the CCL Thesaurus Augustinus Series A-Formae, Thesaurus Patrum Latinorum (1989, Brepols), esp. fiche 213 (frame 40111 contains the reference listed here), for *seruientes, seruus, serui, seruum, seruos, seruorum*, and *seruis* paired with *dei, deo, domini*, and *christi*, as well as the CETEDOC CD ROM (see Appendix B, Table 14 and p. 308–309). In *mor. ecc.* 31.38, we do encounter (again unique to the period) *christi seruus* in the direct citation of Gal. 1.10; CSEL 90. 42 line 18–19; *cf. ‘seruit Christo’* in *mor. Man.* 14.32 citation of Rom. 14.18) – *Ancilla dei/christi* are absent from the period. L.J. Van der Lof’s study of ‘The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine’ (*Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 43–60) notes that ‘In Latin *seruus Dei, servus Christi, ancilla Dei, ancilla Christi* were used as equivalents of *doûlos theou*’ (the ‘Servant of the Lord’ expression of the Old Testament; Van der Lof, 43, with reference to H. Pétré, *Caritas. Étude sur la vocabulaire latin de la charité chrétienne* (1948), 162f.). *Seruus dei* is used regularly in Tertullian (Van der Lof, 43–44), along with *conseruus*, a term also used by Cyprian and Lactantius and linked with *frater* by Ambrose (p. 44). Still, ‘the use of *seruus, famulus* and their derivatives in connection with religion is quite alien to common Latin, in which they speak of *colere deos, cultus deorum*. The idea of serving God derives from the Bible, and phrases like *seruus Dei, servire Deo* mark semantic changes of Christian origin’ (Van der Lof, 46). Augustine’s original uses seem to support this (see Appendix B, Table 14 and esp. n. 18–24, 26, 28).

general idea of serving God, however, is found throughout the period 386-391 even if this precise designation is not.²⁴² Verheijen describes this phrase as a term 'often used by Saint Augustine in a technical way to mean monks and monastic life'.²⁴³ Yet, as Van der Lof has shown, this technical usage is not the only or even primary one in Augustine (esp. in his early period).²⁴⁴ Some of the principal texts referred to in connection with the young Christian Augustine as a 'servant of God' in this period are listed below.²⁴⁵ The *City of God* records:

But in Carthage who are there but only a very few acquainted with what happened to Innocentius, ... Which [happening, i.e. healing] we saw with our own eyes when we were present there. For, having come from across the sea, I and my brother Alypius, not yet clerics but already *serving God*, were staying with him as he was, along with his whole home, very religious (*ciu.* 22.8).²⁴⁶

From the *Confessions*, one reads:

So you [God] made Evodius a member of our circle ... He was baptized and resigned his worldly *militia* on enlisting in your [*militia*]. We were together and by a holy decision resolved to live together. We looked for a place where we could be of *most use in your service*; all of us agreed on a move back to Africa (*conf.* 9.8.17).²⁴⁷

In the letter to Antonius (c. 390), Augustine wrote:

With great joy I have read closely and interpreted the letters of your sanctity,²⁴⁸ because they manifest both your Christian mind – without any of the tarnish of this excessive age, and the greatest kindness towards us. ... I rejoice with you and give thanks to God and our Lord ... that you think so well concerning us that you believe us to be faithful *servants of God* and you love us with a most pure heart. ... to you will be the reward of blessedness ... because [you are] believing us [to be] such as is fitting of *servants of God* (*ep.* 20.1-2).²⁴⁹

²⁴² e.g. *sol.* 1.15.30; *quant.* 34.78; *mor. ecc.* 30.63 (implied); *uera rel.* 14.16 and esp. 50.43. Even though the specific phrase *seruus dei* is first found in Augustine only at the end of the period 386-early 391, the use of *seruire* in conjunction with *deus* is found throughout the period, increasingly. Van der Lof's article does not note the emergence of the phrase *seruus dei* in Augustine but remains very useful and has been drawn on considerably for this discussion.

²⁴³ L. Verheijen, *Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts* 4.32-35 (1979), 27.

²⁴⁴ L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), e.g. 47 and 54.

²⁴⁵ italics mine throughout. The comment of Nebridius to Augustine in *ep.* 5 is also noteworthy: 'I will testify that you love God, that to serve him ... is your desire' (*ego testabor te deum amare, illi seruire atque inhaerere cupere.* CSEL 34.2.1. 11).

²⁴⁶ *Apud Carthaginem autem quis nouit praeter admodum paucissimos salutem, quae facta est Innocentio, ex aduocato uicariae praefecturae, ubi nos interfuimus et oculis aspeximus nostris? Venientes enim de transmarinis me et fratrem meum Alypium, nondum quidem clericos, sed iam Deo seruientes, ut erat cum tota domo sua religiosissimus, ipse suscepit, et apud eum tunc habitabamus.* CCL 48.2. 816.

²⁴⁷ *consociasti nobis et Euodiu[m] iuuenem ex nostro municipio. qui cum agens in rebus militaret, prior nobis ad te conuersus est et baptizatus et relicta militia saeculari accinctus in tua. simul eramus, simul habitaturi placito sancto. quaerebamus quisnam locus nos utilius haberet seruientes tibi; pariter remeabamus in Africam.* O'Donnell, v. 1. 110; CCL 27. 142-143.

²⁴⁸ it is unknown whether Antonius might have been the holder of a Christian office in the Church but this was a phrase often used to address ecclesiastical seniors (cf. W. Parsons, *Saint Augustine: Letters* v. 1, FC 12 (1951), 46 n. 1).

²⁴⁹ *cum magno gaudio litteras sanctitatis tuae consideraui atque digessi, quod et christianum animum tuum sine ullo fuco iniqui temporis et in nos amicissimum prae se gerunt.*

And from Possidius:

Having been made presbyter he then instituted a monastery within the church and began to live with the *servants of God* according to the manner and rule [of life] constituted under the holy Apostles. In which community, above all, no one should have any personal things, but all things should [be held] in common, and it should be distributed to each just as there was need [cf. Acts 4.32-35], which he had already done this previously [*i.e.* lived in this manner], when he had come from across the sea to his own [property] (*uita Aug.* 5).²⁵⁰

Instead of only the strong technical sense of monks and a monastery (undoubted in later uses such as *s.* 355.1.2), these extracts exhibit a fairly broad application of this and similar phrases (including, of course, elements which are influenced or derived from 'monasticism').²⁵¹

Non-ascetic/'monastic' elements in Augustine's concept of serving God also exist and illuminate this discussion. In terms of the specific designation *seruus dei*, of which Augustine may have been aware in 388 and which was used later in describing him as he returned to Africa, Van der Lof has shown that 'often [*serui dei*] means simply ... the converted'.²⁵² Moreover, talking about what he describes as the second sense of '*serui dei*' (*i.e.* pertaining to that 'separate group with a special calling, which was to bear [the] name' of 'brother or sister in the Lord') Van der Lof perceptively notes that the view

that this group was confined to those who lived within a monastic hierarchy ... is not an accurate description of the process that can clearly be traced in Augustine's writings, but was rather the end of the process as it eventually developed after Augustine.²⁵³

As seen, Augustine was part of just this kind of 'separate group' with a sense of special devotion to God (including specific practices: religious, personal, philosophic, etc.) at Thagaste, though not yet within the structure of a 'monastic hierarchy'. In this

Gratulor tibi et gratias ago deo et domino nostro de spe et fide et caritate tua tibi apud eum, quod de nobis tam bene existimas, ut fideles dei seruos esse credas idque ipsum in nobis corde purissimo diligas. ... tibi ad mercedem beatitudinis, quod ad hanc rem adinet, satis est, quod nos tales credens, quales esse oportet seruos dei, toto sinu cordis amplecteris. CSEL 32.1.1. 47-48.

²⁵⁰ *Factusque presbyter monasterium intra ecclesiam mox instituit, et cum Dei seruis uiuere coepit secundum modum et regulam sub sanctis apostolis constitutam. Maxime ut nemo quidquam proprium in illa societate haberet, sed eis essent omnia communia, et distribuerentur unicuique sicut opus erat, quod iam ipse prior fecerat, dum de transmarinis ad sua remeasset.* H.T. Weiskotten (1919), 48.

²⁵¹ L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 51, where he also notes Mandouze's illustration of 'how *serui Dei* is used by Augustine with particular reference to asceticism, and *monachi* with particular reference to coenobitic organization' (cf. Mandouze, *Saint Augustin. L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (1968), 167, cf. *Ep. ad Bonif.* 220.3: *Nempe omnes actus publicos, quibus occupatus eras, relinquere cupiebas et te in otium sanctum conferre atque in ea uita uiuere in qua serui Dei monachi uiuant*).

²⁵² L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 50-54 (esp. 54).

²⁵³ L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 47.

connection, it is worth recalling that at least one of those who had committed themselves to the service of God in the *Confessions*, Nebridius, a very close friend of Augustine's,²⁵⁴ decided not to go on with the others to Thagaste in 388. In fact his requests of and questions for Augustine during the first couple years back in Africa show a noticeably different trajectory of outlook and activity derived from the same 'serui dei' commitment held by both men when they returned to their home country in 388.²⁵⁵ The conclusion from these passages and observations must be that the 'service of God' or even the designation 'seruus/serui dei' did not necessarily imply specific 'monastic' or even ascetic status or position (especially in Augustine's case). Augustine was committed to the service of God but was quite free in his absorption of different ideas and practices towards fulfilling that 'service' over the period at Thagaste.

The completion of *On Music* at Thagaste raises another significant non-'monastic' element which Augustine included in his early idea of serving God, that of his Christian liberal arts program.²⁵⁶ As noted earlier, *On Music* emerged out of Augustine's desire to compose a series of text-books from his new Christian neo-Platonic perspective. The internal progression of the work evidences an increasingly Christian side though not to an extent that compromises the philosophical cohesion of the whole.²⁵⁷ In book six, an interesting passage provides as the motive for philosophical contemplation the goal of serving God:

This is why if numbers of this sort [*i.e.* memories of earthly things], which spring up in the soul dedicated to temporal things, have a beauty of their own, although they effect it by passing away, divine providence envied this beauty, which is formed from our penal mortality which we earn (merit) from the most just law of God. Yet in this [state of mortality/punishment] he has not so abandoned us that we are not able to return or be called back from the pleasure of the carnal senses

²⁵⁴ *cf. ep.* 3-14 for the correspondence between Augustine and Nebridius, far more than with any other early correspondent.

²⁵⁵ *cf. conf.* 9.8.17. There were, naturally, many points of commonality between Nebridius and Augustine, but the Thagaste community and Augustine were moving further and in a slightly different trajectory than Nebridius. Lawless (*Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 47) is right to note that an important aspect of Augustine's literary work is that the 'exchange of twelve letters with Nebridius, seven letters to as many other individuals, and three books written during this interlude reveal both a doctrinal and ecclesial flavour', but they reveal not only these two elements, or doctrinal or ecclesial considerations of only a 'monastic' nature.

²⁵⁶ the initiation of a comprehensive series of *libri disciplinarum* at Milan apparently had been part of the way in which Augustine saw that he could 'be of most use in [God's] service' (*conf.* 9.8.17) in Milan (*cf. ch.* 2, p. 30-33). The very fact of *mus.*'s completion at Thagaste reveals that Augustine still retained a place for general liberal arts training at Thagaste (see *ch.* 5, p. 187 and n. 20 and 23; for discussion of the date *mus.* was completed, but scholars generally place it in 389-early 391). Yet, that Augustine never completed this series, esp. once he was unambiguously in a monastic community and 'under the burden of ecclesiastical authority' at Hippo (*cf. ep.* 101, where Augustine's comments also reveal a general disaffection with the common idea of the liberal arts), raises serious questions for any argument that Augustine saw this program as one part of an overall 'monastic' endeavor.

²⁵⁷ indeed, Augustine continued to see religion and philosophy as complementary in 390-391 (in general terms and in his own personal experience) even if they are not the balanced partners presented in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* but rather with philosophy subsumed under the overarching 'true religion' articulated in *uera rel.* See the discussions below, *ch.* 5, p. 209 and 216f.

by the stretching out of his merciful hand. For such pleasure vigorously fastens onto the memory what it carries over from the fleeting (deceitful) senses. This habit of the soul, having been made by the flesh, because of the carnal state of mind, is called 'flesh' in the divine scriptures. This struggles with the mind, once that apostolic word can be said: 'In mind I serve the law of God, but in the flesh the law of sin' [Rom. 7.25]. But when the mind is suspended (devoted) in the spiritual [realm] it remains there and is fixed there, then the impetus of this practice is shattered, and being repressed bit by bit it is extinguished. For it was greater when we followed; it is not yet completely nothing, but certainly it is less, when we restrain it. And thus by determined retreats from all lascivious passion [of the mind], in which is the defect of the essence of the soul, with pleasure in the numbers of reason having been restored, *our entire life is turned toward God*, giving the body numbers of health, not receiving delight in that; which happens in the exterior person who has become corrupt, even in changing for the better (*italics mine, mus.* 6.11.33).²⁵⁸

Clearly, the understanding in this passage is Christian, but the neo-Platonic framework is unmistakable and sophisticated. Other of Augustine's literary endeavors also contribute to the composite picture of him pursuing a range of interests – including a growing practice of the religious life – within a loosely organized (not to say unprincipled) structure. Works like *The Teacher* as well as many of the selections from *83 Questions* show the considerable time devoted to philosophic questions and dialogue in the Thagaste community. His other works, which are primarily concerned with Manichaeism, firmly place Augustine in the role of apologist and exegete.²⁵⁹ The activities of the Thagaste community reflect a unique course pursued by Augustine and his friends in their commitment to the Christian spiritual life in the presence of God. It was a course not fully circumscribed by the examples of classical *otium*, the urban ascetic house, or the 'monastery'.

These various strands ought not to be seen as separate but as intertwined chords of Augustine's development. The increasingly Christian focus of Augustine's endeavors and Christian framework for his thought at Thagaste are undeniable. Yet, unavoidably

²⁵⁸ *Cur autem si huiusmodi numeri qui fiunt in anima rebus temporalibus dedita, habent sui generis pulchritudinem, quamvis eam transeundo actitent, inuideat huic pulchritudini diuina prouidentia, quae de nostra poenali mortalitate formatur, quam justissima Dei lege meruimus: in qua tamen nos non ita deseruit, ut non ualeamus recurrere, et a carnalium sensuum delectatione, misericordia eius manum porrigente, reuocari. Talis enim delectatio uehementer infigit memoriae quod trahit a lubricis sensibus. Haec autem animae consuetudo facta cum carne, propter carnalem affectionem, in Scripturis diuinis caro nominatur. Haec menti oblucatur, cum iam dici potest apostolicum illud: 'Mente serui legi Dei, carne autem legi peccati' (Rom. 7.25). Sed in spiritualia mente suspensa atque ibi fixa et manente, etiam huius consuetudinis impetus frangitur, et paulatim repressus exstinguitur. Major enim erat cum sequeremur; non tamen omnino nullus, sed certe minor est cum eum refrenamus, atque ita certis regressibus ab omni lasciuiente motu, in quo defectus essentiae est animae, delectatione in rationis numeros restituta ad Deum tota uita nostra conuertitur, dans corpori numeros sanitatis, non accipiens inde laetitiam; quod corrupto exteriore homine, et eius in melius commutatione continget. PL 32. 1181.*

²⁵⁹ it is true that *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* were initially inspired by Augustine's observation of and defensive response toward Manichee claims that they alone practiced ascetic behavior. But the critique leveled against Manichaeism is much broader than debating the ascetic pros and cons of Catholic Christianity and those of the Manichee elect. Moreover, the manner of presentation is clearly apologetic (*i.e.* fairly sensitive with a view to persuade and convert not just condemn: *e.g. mor. ecc.* 35.77; *mor. Man.* 18.65-66; *Gn. a. Man.* 1.2.4).

speculative statements about the Thagaste community (especially in its early phases) often suggest a truncated view of this period, tending to confine it completely to either a 'philosophic retreat' or a 'monastery'. This must be avoided and to an extent redressed.²⁶⁰ During his first two years at Thagaste, Augustine is probably much better viewed as someone with the committed aim of achieving his proper role in activities in service to God by combining a number of different pursuits, rather than as the new 'father' of a new 'monastic' community.²⁶¹ From the evidence, Augustine was the *de facto* head in many practical respects within the community.²⁶² However, he had not taken on the role of recognized leader within an organizational hierarchy. He was not running or organizing an ascetic community. The community should be viewed as having a loose structural framework, committed to ascetic ideals, absorbing the practices of other known ascetic communities and Christian groups (such as the so-called 'Milan circle') but not imitating them. Had Augustine adopted an official leadership position, his own extreme sense of responsibility for those in his 'official' care²⁶³ would probably not have left time for such ambiguously Christian endeavors as exploring the theory of language, finishing his treatise on music, and neo-Platonic contemplation.²⁶⁴ Overall, to place these activities within a 'monastic' framework (especially one which is defined from later manifestations) is to force an interpretation and to risk losing a balanced view of what is known (*and not known*) of Augustine and the Thagaste community.

²⁶⁰ L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 55, notes, with reference to H.J. Diesner ('Possidius und Augustinus', *SP* 6 (1962), 356), that 'Possidius puts the personality of Augustine with his wide-ranging creative ambition in the strait-jacket of the monastic ideal'; a perhaps extreme but helpful warning.

²⁶¹ that ascetic practice was a foundation-stone of Augustine's earliest and continuing ideal of the religious life is not in doubt, but the extant sources suggest that if there is a personal ideal to which Augustine looks as a new Catholic it is not be to any *particular* ascetic type of figure but to the more general ideal of the 'great and learned [Catholic] men' combined with some kind of asceticism, both of which he had already observed in a number of different forms (*e.g. mor. ecc.* 1.10.16 and 1.31.63f.). These ideals in and of themselves would not have moved him significantly toward one known role (such as '*pater*') over another (such as '*presbyter*'). As has been discussed, it seems clear only that Augustine was not drawn toward the clerical or the hermitic life (see ch. 2 n. 62; ch. 3, p. 114; and *conf.* 10.43.70).

²⁶² *cf. diu. qu.* 1-50; *ep.* 10.1; *uita Aug.* 3.

²⁶³ *cf.* his tremendous effort on their behalf later in the monastery, clerical monastery, and see of Hippo; *e.g. ep.* 21 and 22 (*cf.* also the end of the extract from *ep.* 10.2 above, p. 149 n. 112).

²⁶⁴ *e.g.* at Hippo, after his request to Valerius for time to study the scriptures (*ep.* 21), finding himself in the two-fold position of presbyter and monastic leader, Augustine specifically began to focus his attention on aspects which were required by his position. Moreover, the position of such ascetic communal 'fathers' as Augustine had seen at Rome (*mor. ecc.* 1.31.67 and 1.33.70) was more circumscribed than the fruit of his labor suggests his role in the Thagaste community was (whether within an articulated framework or hierarchy or not). We could also probably expect more specific comments about community life in the works of the period (*esp.* the letters) if Augustine had been acting in the role of community 'father'.

Arguments for a Monastery at Thagaste, and Response

The most recent and significant argument for the 'recognition of Thagaste as a monastery'²⁶⁵ has been advanced by George Lawless in *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* (1987, 45-58). After listing the three perspectives which he feels represent the scholarly views on this issue,²⁶⁶ Lawless begins to 'set forth reasons which compel' him 'to characterise the life at Thagaste between the years 388-92 as providing a genuinely monastic experience'.²⁶⁷ His arguments serve as the basis of the discussion which follows, complemented by critique, selective agreement, and the interjection of a tentative position on the question of the nature of the Thagaste community.

First, in response to the point of Halliburton and Stancliffe that 'on philological grounds, from the meaning of ... *seruus dei*', we are 'not justified ... to speak [sic] of a monastery at Thagaste' (brackets Lawless') and to 'those who deny even a quasi-monastic status to the similarly minded group which settled at Thagaste',²⁶⁸ Lawless quotes Brown's²⁶⁹ comments that,

*In the year before he was made a priest in Hippo, Augustine may already have tried to fill out his life – to organise his community, to found the personal relations within it upon a permanent code of behaviour, ... [and to exercise some authority over the members]. ... As a result the group ... came, by slow and subtle stages, to resemble a 'monastery' with Augustine as 'spiritual father' (italics mine).*²⁷⁰

Lawless continues with another quote ('with less diffidence') from Brown: 'such a life [monastic] had already begun to influence Augustine in his first year in Thagaste'.²⁷¹ He says that he 'is willing to go further than [Brown] on this',²⁷² but before proceeding to Lawless' even stronger views, several things from Brown's actual comments should be noted. The temporal sensitivity to the developments at Thagaste which he presents is especially noteworthy. Brown explicitly places the effort

²⁶⁵ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45.

²⁶⁶ see above p. 173 n. 228.

²⁶⁷ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45. More recently, J.J. O'Donnell follows suit in identifying Augustine's situation in 389 as a 'genuinely monastic environment' (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992) 69).

²⁶⁸ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 46, where he says that such ones 'suggest that "from the company kept and interests pursued it would appear that it is in its essentials a continuation of the retreat of Cassiciacum"' (citing C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (1983), 29).

²⁶⁹ who 'justifiably disallows a detached attitude toward coenobitic life at Thagaste' (Lawless, 47).

²⁷⁰ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 135-6.

²⁷¹ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 47 (cf. Brown, 136); though to qualify this quote as 'less diffident' is curious since the observation that Augustine's contact with ascetic communal life at Rome influenced his thinking and some of his ideas for pursuing the religious life at Thagaste in no way qualifies Brown's previous statement that any active imitation of this 'monastic life' only gradually emerged in 390-391.

²⁷² G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45.

Augustine may have made to 'organize his community' in late 390-391, during 'the year before he was made a priest at Hippo'. Moreover, even during this year, the community only began to 'resemble a "monastery"', 'by slow and subtle stages'. Brown's comments (p. 136) adequately capture the necessarily uncertain flavor that any strong statements about the nature of the community must have.²⁷³ His perspective seems fully congruent with the view that:

1. from the evidence, it is not justifiable to make an absolute statement about the nature of the Thagaste community;
2. a 'monastic' or quasi-monastic side of the community can only be spoken about in the latter part of the Thagaste years (if at all); and
3. instead of the community being at any point 'founded' as a 'monastery',²⁷⁴ the community's increasingly 'monastic' resemblance emerged out of various developing relationships and individual activities (most significantly those of Augustine himself) progressively, 'slowly and in stages'.²⁷⁵

These points have been adopted as a reasonable and conservative guideline to follow in presenting the community at Thagaste.²⁷⁶

Lawless' attempt to 'go further' than Brown leads him into a questionable line of argument. He sets the stage for his endeavor with the statement, 'Actual foundation of

²⁷³ indeed, Brown immediately follows the statements quoted by Lawless with the qualifier that 'There must, inevitably, be a large element of speculation in this ['monastic' development] view of Augustine. His relations with the monastic movement at that time, are most obscure' (*Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 136). He continues, 'What we do know, however, is the way in which the monastic life had come to appeal to [Augustine]: the monks seemed to him to have succeeded in living in permanent communities, where all personal relationships were moulded by the dictates of Christian charity, presided over by men who exercised a permanent, fatherlike authority over willing charges' (citing *mor. ecc.* 31.67, 73). Lawless is aware of the 'the tentative language employed by ... scholars in their estimation of Thagaste' and of the consequent 'difficulties which beset the researcher of this disputed question [over the 'monastic' nature of the community]' (*Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 47). In my estimation, there is no doubt that the kind of life noted by Brown had already 'begun to influence Augustine in his first year at Thagaste' (Brown, 136; cited with approval by Lawless, 47), but there is considerable question over the effects of this influence. What I want to avoid is losing the distinction the evidence suggests between Thagaste and Hippo and some highly probable aspects of progress at Thagaste by labeling the community as a 'monastery' (esp. *throughout* the period 388-391) or by reading back into a labeled 'monastery' at Thagaste organization, regulations, and practices of life that are known from Augustine's later monastic endeavors.

²⁷⁴ Brown states that 'In Milan and Rome [Augustine] had visited the first "monasteries", and had heard distant, somewhat romantic, tales of the great communities of Egypt. But *it is unlikely that he now thought of "founding" a "monastery" immediately on his arrival in Thagaste*: the old forms of a life of scholarly retirement, reinforced by his ecclesiastical status as a *servus Dei*, probably seemed sufficient' (italics mine), *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 136.

²⁷⁵ Brown says that 'By 391, the transformation is complete' from Augustine being a 'contemplative' with a desire 'to be something more' into one actually organizing and seeking to recruit for and establish the reality of a monastery (*Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 135-136). Regrettably, this language of 'transformation' is almost entirely absent from Lawless' discussion of this period.

²⁷⁶ e.g. p. 153f. above.

a 'monastery' in a technical sense is another matter. For the moment, I wish simply to propose that the Thagaste community need not have been designated as a "monastery" by Augustine or anyone else in order to qualify as one'.²⁷⁷ By this, Lawless means more than that the word *monasterium* need not have been used of the community.²⁷⁸ Apparently the community did not need to recognize itself as a 'monastery'²⁷⁹ or be known by others as a 'monastery' in order to be one. This view is defended by saying that

Augustine's later commentary on Ps. 99, § 12 employs *monasterium* in a sense which is wholly congruent with everything we know about Thagaste, and this fact suggests an indirect inference that the community there may suitably be depicted as monastic.²⁸⁰

He clarifies this 'inference' by stating that

Augustine's four rudiments of monastic life (manual labor,²⁸¹ reading, prayer, and the study of the Scriptures)²⁸² likewise conform with our information about Thagaste, except for work of an intellectual nature, which appears to have taken the place of manual labor.²⁸³

Hence, for Lawless, 'when we read Augustine on Augustine, there is to my knowledge no passage which militates against calling Thagaste a monastery in a bona-fide sense'.²⁸⁴ While Lawless notes in his discussion that it is 'unscientific to read history

²⁷⁷ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 47.

²⁷⁸ which is generally accepted; see J.K. Coyle, "Monastic" Terminology in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, *SP* 16 (1985), 499. Coyle's comments imply that Augustine would have used another word such as *diuersorium* corresponding to ascetic and monastic groups with which he was familiar at Rome.

²⁷⁹ apparently by any name, whatever such a group would have been called in the context. This seems to be Lawless' sentiment, but he is at least maintaining that Augustine's community, regardless of whether it understood itself as a 'monastery' or not, was part of the monastic movement in the West from the point of its supposed establishment in 388.

²⁸⁰ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 49-50, where (p. 49) he also notes that 'Letter 48, too, written c. 398 and addressed to Abbot Eudoxius and his monks on the island of Capraria, makes no mention of *monasterium*, yet its contents are as applicable to what we know about life at Thagaste as they are to its addressees'.

²⁸¹ Lawless argues that the intellectual endeavors undertaken at Thagaste provide a satisfactory replacement for manual labor since Augustine incorporates intellectual labor in his later monasticism (*Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 50). However, I find such replacement absent, in any monastic or shared sense, in the reports of the Roman ascetic communities in *mor. ecc.* (see particularly *mor. ecc.* 1.31.67, 68; and 1.33.70), and hence this argument is weak.

²⁸² derived from *op. mon.* 29.37.

²⁸³ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 50.

²⁸⁴ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 50, where he goes on to comment, 'At the risk of providing an anti-climax to this chapter, it is fair to suggest that the word 'monastery' of itself is not so important. In this connection I invoke Augustine's own criterion, *non verba sed res*' (citing *ord.* 2.2.4). Yet surely for the historian the association in the record of a specific title (here '*monasterium*') with one specific place (Hippo) and not another (Thagaste) suggests that the two *res* which one is seeking to illuminate are quite possibly different (even if highly continuous). Such a possibly illuminating difference between the communities is not clarified at all (indeed is muted) by assigning the same word back on the Thagaste community (a sort of unwanted subjecting the *res* to the *uerbum*).

backwards',²⁸⁵ it is difficult to see how his line of argument avoids this danger.²⁸⁶ Saying that the later Augustine does not explicitly proscribe activities such as apologetic writing, philosophical contemplation,²⁸⁷ etc. does not mean that these activities observed at Thagaste fit most naturally into the framework of a 'monastery'. Rather, Augustine's later comments and practice simply indicate the breadth and flexibility of his later monasticism, which emerged in part out of the kind of broad interests which were not just permissible but even normal at Thagaste.

Therefore, to say that what Augustine later described as monastic principles or *regula* occurred in some form at Thagaste, is not to say that these elements were practiced there in a regular, organized, or obligatory way, and it certainly does not imply that the community was a 'monastery'. The fact that (mental) labor, reading, prayer, and the study of scripture occurred at Thagaste does not *in itself* imply the existence of a 'monastery' any more than their occurrence in 386/87 would have evidenced a 'monastery' at Cassiciacum.²⁸⁸ The power of Lawless' argument primarily results from the relative silence in the sources about daily life at Thagaste.²⁸⁹ The 'four rudiments' cited by Lawless were also present at Cassiciacum. It is simply because they can be seen there (along with, more importantly, the non-'monastic' aspects of Cassiciacum) in an explicit framework of daily life that precludes the identification of a 'monastery' there (if one adopted Lawless' line of argument). As it is, these later monastic 'rudiments' are recognized simply as important aspects²⁹⁰ but certainly not as the dominant framework of life for the Cassiciacum community. The same thing was probably true of the community around Augustine at Thagaste despite the differences between it and the earlier community at Cassiciacum.

²⁸⁵ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 50.

²⁸⁶ it is, as he says, 'fair to point out Augustine's consistency in this matter [*i.e.* of giving up ones possessions in order to pursue the ascetic/'monastic' life at Thagaste] and his subsequent behavior as bishop', in this as well as a number of other areas of ascetic practice, but Lawless goes beyond just noting lines of continuity in ascetic practice.

²⁸⁷ though Augustine the bishop would criticize some of the philosophy discussed and practiced at Thagaste (*e.g. retr.* 1.11.2-4).

²⁸⁸ where, in fact, manual labor *is* recorded as a part of the community's life.

²⁸⁹ my opinion is that if the amount of detail were known about Thagaste as is known about Cassiciacum, then, at least from 388 to early 390, we would not observe the individual and corporate practice of reading, 'labor', prayer, or the study of scripture occurring in a regulated manner or under an expressed or very organized structure (even if we might observe them more frequently than we have recorded). The tenor of a 'religious college' (Bonner's phrase, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 108) and of individual or small groups philosophizing illustrated by the correspondence with Nebridius (of Plato and Plotinus as well as Christ), or the *diu. qu.*, or the intellectual exercises in *mag.* or *mus.*, would be equally more manifest. See esp. *ep.* 10; cf. Zumkeller, *Augustine's ... Religious Life* (1987), 27, for comments illustrating strong links between the activities and emphases of the early Thagaste community and those of the group in retreat at Cassiciacum.

²⁹⁰ cf. ch. 1, p. 8-10.

In the final analysis, Lawless can merely affirm that there are 'monastic'-like elements (or occurrences) at Thagaste and that knowledge of the 'monastic' life informed certain aspects of the Thagaste community (increasingly). By placing the non-'monastic' activities and endeavors, which are known to have existed in the Thagaste community, under the rubric of a formal 'monastery', one risks moving beyond prudent comment to unjustified speculation, elevating one body of evidence over another without external justification.²⁹¹ Furthermore, the community comes to be treated as a static object, whereas the evidence (especially for Augustine personally but also in what little is known about the community) demonstrates that Thagaste was a place of significant evolution. A 'monastic' foundation or the decision for such a foundation did take place at Thagaste by the time of Augustine's journey to Hippo in 391. However, the motivation for this decision emerged and increased at Thagaste in conjunction with other identifiable progressions in Augustine's Christian life and (particularly ecclesiological) thought there. Therefore, Lawless's concluding statement, 'To say that Augustine's family home possessed the accoutrements of Christian monasticism does not, it seems to me, either strain the existing evidence or overstate the case',²⁹² is precluded by the above considerations.

²⁹¹ the internal evidence seems to manifest the general trend of Augustine consolidating his thoughts on various topics over the course of the period from late 388 to early 391.

²⁹² G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 58.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUGUSTINE'S EARLY ECCLESIOLOGY 390-391: A FIRST COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING AND 'MONASTIC' DIRECTION

INTRODUCTION

The years 390-391 at Thagaste, Augustine's last as a layman before being conscripted into the clergy at Hippo, mark the period of his first Christian synthesis. Eugene TeSelle has commented that 'towards the end of Augustine's stay in Thagaste we find a new interest in the topic of "religion"' in his writings.¹ This chapter will clarify that such a development (demonstrated *prima facie* simply by the significant increase in Augustine's use of the word *religio*)² did not indicate an *initial* interest or involvement in 'religion' but rather resulted from the achievement of a first religious synthesis. The consolidation of the Christian ideas which appeared in Augustine's writings from 386 onwards led to increased discussion and action under the rubric of 'religion'. For Augustine, 'true religion' had become the over-arching construct which included and incorporated all truth in understanding and practice.³ His writings from 390 and early 391 possess a new confidence, presuming a comprehensive (though for him, necessarily incomplete) grasp of the 'Catholic religion' and presenting it in comprehensive terms. His confidence and comments suggest that Augustine was prepared to develop personal and communal modes of life based on his understanding of 'true religion' towards the end of his stay at Thagaste.

One important element in Augustine's new religious synthesis was ecclesiology. As he came to his first summary understanding of Catholic Christianity, Augustine arrived at his first ecclesiological synthesis. This synthesis was Catholic, historic, educational, protective, ascetic, and indeed 'monastic'. As the consolidation of Augustine's first ecclesiology in 390/391 is explored, each of these elements can be specifically understood within the framework of his new religious emphasis.

¹ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 123.

² see Appendix B, Table 13.

³ Augustine was intensely committed to the unity of theory and practice; indeed, he did not even think of them as disparate items needing to be brought together.

TEXTS AND CHRONOLOGY

Although it is difficult to be certain exactly when the various writings from Thagaste were begun or completed, there seems to be an identifiable group which comes from the later Thagaste period.⁴ Table 5 lists the texts that were probably written at Thagaste from late 389 to early 391.

Table 5: Augustine's writings at Thagaste, Part Two (late 389 through early 391)⁵

Works	Probable:	Writing Period	Publication
<i>mus.</i>	(bk. 6 and probably revision of bk. 1-5) ⁶	late 389-390	390
<i>uera rel.</i>		390	late 390/ea. 391
<i>diu. qu.</i>	(25-50) ⁷	389-391	c. 396

Hence, *On True Religion*,⁸ *On Music*, and *83 Different Questions* are the primary texts for a consideration of this period.⁹ Some other texts (such as *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans* or *The Teacher*), considered to be earlier works, may have been written (or completed and published) as late as 390;¹⁰ however, because the view adopted here is that they belong to the earlier Thagaste years, the conclusions to be drawn from them have already been discussed in the previous chapter. Since this is a study of a historical development, the demonstration of ecclesiological movement as gleaned from Augustine's works and other secondary sources in relation to the order of his texts within as accurate a chronological framework as possible is the objective. Although fairly specific chronological placement has been presented, the overall order of Augustine's early works is less controversial; and thus, the lines of development discussed should remain intact even if they should need to be compressed or elongated at some points in line with varying chronological placements of certain works. This

⁴ for the 'earlier' works from Thagaste see ch. 4, Table 4.

⁵ see Appendix A for supporting evidence and argument as well as Table 6, showing the probable (and different) order of the inception of these writings.

⁶ see n. 20 and 23 for details.

⁷ discussed and noted but not collated or published (*retr.* 1.26.1). As noted in detail in ch. 4, n. 38, the complete *diu. qu.* was not published until 396, and it is not clear which of questions 25-50 were composed before Augustine's journey to Thagaste in 391 or later in that year.

⁸ *uera rel.* was certainly the last work Augustine wrote before traveling to Hippo. In recent statements concerning its date, G. Bonner (*Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534) says it was written 'in 390'; G.J.P. O'Daly (*Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 7/8 (1994), 1004-1005) and G. Madec ('*Le De ciuitate Dei comme De uera religione*', *Interiorita e intenzionalita nel 'De Civitate Dei' di Sant Agostino* (1991), 12) say the same; and J. Rist (*Augustine* (1994), xvii) assigns it to '390', after *mus.*

⁹ some of the letters written during this time will be cited at appropriate junctures, but on the whole the letters add relatively little to the discussion.

¹⁰ the outside date of *mag.* given by Perler for example; cf. Appendix A, Table 6.

chapter will focus almost entirely upon *On True Religion*, because it is certainly the most significant text, and upon *On Music*, because it offers a unique window into longer-term continuity and development in Augustine's thought since it was written periodically over the years 387-390. Sections of 83 *Questions* are from the years 390-391; but, as has been discussed already, the difficulties of this collection especially in terms of its chronology mean that it will be used only to provide support for observations from *On True Religion* and *On Music* and the ecclesiological developments illuminated by them.¹¹ Finally, the conclusions drawn will be related to evidence from writings concerning and just after Augustine's entry into the priesthood in order to summarize what can and cannot be said about the ecclesiology with which he came to Hippo in 391. Each of these considerations will reinforce the claim that Augustine was conscious of having forged an ecclesiological synthesis as one significant part of a whole 'religious' synthesis in 390/391.

AUGUSTINE'S *DE MUSICA*

Because it engaged Augustine's attention and was probably composed periodically between 387 and early 390, *On Music* may provide insights into Augustine's development during this formative Christian period. Upon close consideration¹² it affords some illumination for the discussion of the nature of the Thagaste community and Augustine's emerging ecclesiology. Initially envisioned in 387 when Augustine returned from Cassiciacum to Milan at the beginning of the Lenten season, *On Music* was to be part of a series of volumes on the liberal arts which he intended to write from his new-found position as a Christian philosopher inquiring after the understanding of truth.¹³ In fact, these six books were just the first part of a proposed two-part work,¹⁴ and this contribution on music, in turn, would have comprised only one work along with others on the subjects of: grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, geometry, arithmetic, and philosophy.¹⁵ In his *Review*, Augustine wrote that:

¹¹ the most significant information which *diu. qu.* affords regarding 390-391 is the transition, in general terms, from more specifically philosophical questions during the first two years at Thagaste (such as, is the soul self-moving?) to more theological questions towards the end of the period. This is congruent with the position that the Thagaste community was not founded as a 'monastery' *per se* but that it did develop towards more narrow, explicitly Catholic pursuits.

¹² esp. consideration of bk. 6 (by far the most significant of the six books), which was written, probably in its entirety, at Thagaste.

¹³ *retr.* 1.6.

¹⁴ 'as far as pertains to that part which is called rhythm' (*retr.* 1.6: *De musica sex uolumina, quantum attinet ad eam partem quae rithmus uocatur.* CCL 57. 17); to be complemented by a second section on harmony which was never written (*cf. ep.* 101.1, 3).

¹⁵ see the discussion of Augustine's liberal arts project (and select references to the literature) in ch. 2, p. 30-33 and 45-46.

At the same time that I was about to receive baptism in Milan,¹⁶ I also undertook to write books on the liberal disciplines, questioning those who were with me and who were not averse to studies of this kind ... desiring to reach or to lead to incorporeal things through corporeal things, as if by distinct steps. But of these I was able to complete only the book *On Grammar* – which afterwards I lost from our library – and six volumes *On Music*, which pertain to that part [of music] called rhythm.¹⁷ But I wrote these six books when already baptized and after I had returned to Africa from Italy, [for] I had only begun that discipline at Milan. But from [work on] the five other disciplines similarly begun there: dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, philosophy; only the beginnings remained, and even them I lost. I think they are in the hands of some others (*retr.* 1.6).¹⁸

This comment comes at the end of the section reviewing *On the Immortality of the Soul*, but Augustine's primary reference to *On Music* in the *Review* lies between *On Genesis against the Manichaeans* and *The Teacher* (i.e. in *retr.* 1.11). He noted that the sixth book of *On Music* had 'become particularly well known' on account of its discussion of incorporeal reality (and the ascent of the soul to it through the study of rhythm and number).¹⁹ As with other of Augustine's treatises from the period 386 to 391, dating the inception, writing, completion, and publishing of this work is not quite straightforward.²⁰

¹⁶ cf. *conf.* 9.6.14.

¹⁷ cf. also *retr.* 1.11.1 for comments specifically on *mus.*

¹⁸ *Per idem tempus, quo Mediolani fui baptismum percepturus, etiam disciplinarum libros conatus sum scribere, interrogans eos qui mecum erant atque ab huiusmodi studiis non abhorrebant, per corporalia cupiens ad incorporea quibusdam quasi passibus certis uel peruenire uel ducere. Sed earum solum De grammatica librum absoluere potui, quem postea de armario nostro perdi, et De musica sex uolumina, quantum attinet ad eam partem quae rithmus uocatur. Sed eosdem sex libros iam baptizatus iamque ex Italia regressus in Africam scripsi, inchoaueram quippe tantummodo istam apud Mediolanum disciplinam. De aliis uero quinque disciplinis illic similiter inchoatis – de dialectica, de rethorica, de geometrica, de arithmetica, de philosophia – sola principia remanserunt, quae tamen etiam ipsa perdidimus; sed haberi ab aliquibus existimo. CCL 57. 17.* In short, he began all the works on the liberal disciplines at Milan but completed only *gramm.* there. In Africa, *mus.* was also finished.

¹⁹ *retr.* 1.11.1: 'Next, as was recounted above [*retr.* 1.6], I wrote six books on music, of which the sixth became particularly well known, because something deserving of examination was considered [there], i.e. how one can reach immutable numbers from corporeal and spiritual but changeable numbers, which [immutable numbers] are already in immutable truth itself, and thus [how] the invisible things of God "are perceived through these things which are made" [cf. Rom. 1.20] ...' (*Deinde, ut supra commemoravi, sex libros de musica scripsi, quorum ipse sextus maxime innotuit, quoniam res in eo cognitione digna uersatur, quomodo a corporalibus et spiritalibus sed mutabilibus numeris perueniatur ad inmutabiles numeros, qui iam in ipsa sunt inmutabili ueritate, et sic inuisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciantur. Quod qui non possunt et tamen ex fide Christi uiuunt, ad illa certius atque felicius conspicienda post hanc uitam ueniunt. Qui autem possunt, si desit eis fides Christi, qui unus mediator est dei et hominum, cum tota sapientia sua pereunt. CCL 57. 33*); cf. C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 27.

²⁰ see below, n. 23. It should be noted that H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (1938), 580-583, questioned whether the first chapter of book six was added later (indeed suggesting that the difference in character between book six and the first five books may imply a substantial later revision of the last book, cf. C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 28 n. 153). Augustine probably revised book six to some extent before sending it to bishop Antonius (cf. *ep.* 101.4), but it is not at all clear that this means that chapter 6.1.1 was a totally new addition (or was even 'revised'). I will provisionally treat chapter one of book six as existing in an unrevised form in 390 when the work was first completed (see J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275).

The inception of *On Music* should be placed in the period just before Augustine's baptism. The preliminary writings (the 'beginnings' referred to above in *retr.* 1.6) most likely emerged out of the discussions which took place at Milan and probably also during the ensuing travel back to Africa (if including his companions among those whom he said were with him and interested in such studies). Such preliminary work might even have been as detailed as that found in *On the Immortality of the Soul*, which Augustine described as more of a sketch than a properly finished work.²¹ The bulk of the writing (maybe to be envisioned more as the organizing and linking of previous notes and dialogues) occurred during and after his return to North Africa. Book six was most likely composed completely in Africa.²² Scholars differ over when the work was finished, but the generally agreed parameters for completion are late 388 to 391.²³ Carol Harrison has provided an excellent summary (and introduction) to *On Music* in the context of the liberal arts.²⁴

Even within *On Music* the over-arching liberal arts interest of the author can be discerned.²⁵ The whole treatise is couched within the neo-Platonic aim of moving from the consideration of 'changeable numbers' of inferior things to the 'unchangeable numbers in unchangeable truth itself'.²⁶ The philosophical orientation of the composition is demonstrated by various comments on such things as: the question of

²¹ *retr.* 1.5.1: *Post libros soliloquiorum iam de agro Mediolanum reuersus scripsi librum de immortalitate animae, quod mihi quasi commonitorium esse uolueram propter Soliloquia terminanda, quae imperfecta remanserant. Sed nescio quomodo me inuito exiit in manus hominum, et inter mea opuscula nominatur. Qui primo ratiocinationum contortione atque breuitate sic obscurus est, ut fatiget cum legitur etiam intentionem meam, uixque intellegatur a me ipso.* CCL 57. 15-16.

²² cf. E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 11.

²³ R.C. Taliaferro, the work's only English translator, feels *mus.* was completed 'in Africa after *De magistro* in 391' (see his introduction in *FC* 4 (1947), 153); J.S. Quasten (*Patrology* v. 4 (1954), 360) just states that it was 'finished between 388-391'; E. TeSelle (*Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 11) assigns bk. 1-5 to 387 and bk. 6 to 389, though p. 120 implies that the completion of *mus.* was 'toward 390'; G. Finaert (*BA* 7 (1947), 8) places it in 389; and most recently J. Rist (*Augustine* (1994), xvii) places *mus.* after *mag.* (which he assigns to 389) and says it was 'completed' 'c. 390'. Dates from Bardy and Perler also fall within these parameters, see Appendix A, Table 6. My opinion is that some discussion, esp. pertaining to material in the sixth book, may have happened earlier in Thagaste but that the actual composing and finishing work on the book occurred in late 389 and/or the first half of 390.

²⁴ C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 28-31. She also details (p. 28-29) the concerns of the each book of *De musica*: 'analyzing the nature of number (Book I), metre (II), rhythm (III-IV), and verse (V)', all with the aim of coming 'from sensible traces of music to the "real places where it is free of all body" [*mus.* 5.13.28]'; 'how this is possible is discussed in Book VI'.

²⁵ see e.g. the comments about the relationship of 'art' (*ars*), 'imitation' (*imitatio*), 'reason' (*ratione*), and 'science' (*scientia*) in *mus.* 1.4.6.

²⁶ *retr.* 1.11.1 (see n. 19 above for text), cf. *retr.* 1.6; the goal of the discussion according to *mus.* 6.2.2 was 'that we may pass from corporeal things to those incorporeal' (*Quamobrem tu cum quo mihi nunc ratio est, familiaris meus, ut a corporeis ad incorporea transeamus ...* PL 32. 1163); cf. also *mus.* 5.13.23 and 6.1.1.

memory;²⁷ the concept of the one or ultimate unity being figured by the three basic numbers – 1, 2, 3 (the bases of all proportions);²⁸ the relationship between reason and authority;²⁹ and the reminders of the power of reason and what it enables to be accomplished in the discussion.³⁰ From its opening definitions of its subject, *On Music* is concerned with the divine and the spiritual.³¹

The Christian Nature of De Musica

As would be expected if it was composed at different stages between the beginning of 387 and the beginning of 391, specifically Christian developments appear within *On Music*.³² Augustine himself draws a distinction between the orientation of the first five books (which he called 'our trivial discussion' (*nostram nugacitatem*) and 'childish' (*pueriliter*))³³ and book six. This last book, in Taliaferro's words, presents the 'hierarchy of numbers as constitutive of the soul, the universe and the angels'.³⁴ The philosophical link between ascent from corporeal understanding (in books 1-5) to discussion of the incorporeal (in book 6) is quite logical.³⁵ The distinctiveness of book six reflects the natural spiritual culmination of the preceding study of the details of

²⁷ i.e. whether memory pertains to the mind, the body, or to both (*mus.* 1.4.8: *D. Non enim si per sensus percipimus aliquid quod memoriae commendamus, ideo in corpore memoria esse putanda est. M. Magna fortasse ista quaestio est ... PL 32. 1087*).

²⁸ *mus.* 1.12.23.

²⁹ *mus.* 2.7.14-2.11.21; 3.2.4; 3.8.19; 5.1.1. See also the very good, recent discussion by C. Harrison of authority and reason, with special emphasis on the early Christian Augustine, in *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 47f.

³⁰ e.g. *mus.* 6.10.25: *M. Age, nunc aspice, in uim potentiamque rationis, quantum ex operibus eius aspicere possumus. PL 32. 1177*.

³¹ cf. *mus.* 1.2.3; 1.3.4. Many other interesting elements are to be found in the technical and philosophical early sections of *mus.* One such is the equation between the 'ancients' (who had established the musical/philosophical principles under discussion) and authority (i.e. Augustine's recognition of the authority of the ancients *per se*). This did not mean that simply because some piece of information was ancient (or supported by ancients) that it was correct; reason explains and sets the criteria of understanding historical authority (see *mus.* 2.1.1; 2.8.16; 2.11.21; 3.2.4; 5.1.1). Later Augustine wrote that 'the public is not easily persuaded of such things [refined views]. For the power of custom is so great that, if things are long established and are born from false opinion, nothing is more hostile to the truth' (*mus.* 5.5.10: *M. Ego quoque rectissimum esse iudico, sed non facile ista populo persuadentur. Tanta enim est uis consuetudinis, ut ea inueterata, si falsa opinione genita est, nihil sit inimicius ueritati. PL 32. 1152*). The superiority of belief leading to understanding over simple belief is seen in *mus.* 3.8.19.

³² e.g. after the philosophically technical introduction and first three chapters, in which Augustine employed various selections of classical verse (such as from Terence, cf. 2.11.20) to illustrate his points on rhythm, in chapter four (e.g. esp. 4.4.5), Augustine used Christian meter among his illustrations. C. Harrison (*Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 27) speaks of the 'detailed extended analysis of the first line of Ambrose's hymn, "Deus Creator Omnium"' in books one to five.

³³ *mus.* 6.1.1.

³⁴ R.C. Taliaferro, *FC* 4 (1947), 154.

³⁵ C. Harrison (*Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), esp. 29) demonstrates the natural flow of book six from the first five books.

rhythm (often pertaining to the senses).³⁶ Therefore, there is no need to consider book six to be a later addition or product of significant later revision *outside* 387-391 (as Marrou suggested).³⁷ The writing and the basis in oral discussion (if there was such) for book six took place at Thagaste and probably later in the period 388-391 than the rest of the books. Despite the philosophical cohesion of the whole treatise, there is a very significant difference in Christian terminology between the last book and the first five. The earlier books contain explicitly Christian phrases primarily in so much as they consider Christian verse,³⁸ but in book six Augustine himself employed a more extended Christian vocabulary.³⁹ Moreover, within book six, discussions of the 'sacrament' of Christ's incarnation and death,⁴⁰ human sin in light of God's divine providence,⁴¹ the origin and nature of sin,⁴² commentary on scripture,⁴³ and the resolution and culmination of the human virtues in the Christian concept of love,⁴⁴ reflect a more mature Christian (philosophical) perspective. Since Augustine saw the incorporeal as far supreme over the corporeal and over the means by which the ascent to spiritual things was made, there should be a real difference between the descriptions in book six and the first five books. Understanding, if it was gained from books one to five, would allow the reader to grasp the later, higher discourse.⁴⁵ In summary, *On Music*, and especially book six, provides a useful starting point for examining Augustine's view of the church and his actions in and toward it during the period of 390/391.

DE MUSICA'S ECCLESIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of *On Music* for evaluating whether Augustine's community at

³⁶ from its inception at Milan, or so he claimed (*retr.* 1.6), Augustine's intention was for a work of two levels.

³⁷ cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Confession* v. 2 (1992), 278. O'Donnell also notes that 'The sixth book of *mus.* is the place where the ordinariness of schoolbooks gives way to something different' (p. 275) and later comments that this shift in the tone or focus in book six 'drove Marrou, 580-583, to an unnecessary hypothesis about two editions of the work' (*Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275 n. 15).

³⁸ e.g. *mus.* 4.4.5.

³⁹ all eight derivatives from *sanctus* (and also the one occurrence of *santificatio*) are found in bk. 6. The uses of *seruus/seruire* in conjunction with *deus* are also found only in bk. 6 (i.e. '*Mente serui legi dei, carne autem legi peccati*' (Rom. 7.25), 6.11.33 (PL 32. 1181); *deo seruire*, 6.13.40 (PL 32.1184); *seruit ... deo*, 6.25.50 (PL 32. 1189); *dei nutibus seruiens*, 6.17.57 (PL 32. 1191)). Other significant Christian terms which appear in the work only in bk. 6 include: *christianus* (twice), *christus* (3x), *pietas* (once), *charitas* (4x), *apostolus* (4x), *haeretici* (twice). Terminological observations such as these certainly suggest that book 6 was later than the first five books and, in its entirety, was from Thagaste (probably the later portion of the stay there).

⁴⁰ *mus.* 6.4.7.

⁴¹ *mus.* 6.11.29-30.

⁴² e.g. *mus.* 6.4.7; 6.5.13; 6.11.30; continued in *uera rel.* (cf. 20.38).

⁴³ e.g. *mus.* 6.7.19; 6.5.14.

⁴⁴ *mus.* 6.15.49-6.16.55.

⁴⁵ cf. *mus.* 5.13.23.

Thagaste in 388-391 was in fact a 'monastery' has been noted previously.⁴⁶ However, other insights derived from the work are as (or even more) significant to an understanding of Augustine's early ecclesiological development. For example, book six contains an intellectual framework for the Christian religious life.⁴⁷ Most significantly, book six reveals a change in Augustine's view of other Christians. Specifically, Augustine began to view non-intellectually minded Christians as spiritual on the basis of their religious lives. This change may have prepared the way for his willingness to live and work personally with such believers and to be more closely involved in the general and institutional Christian community.⁴⁸ Besides Augustine's increased tolerance of those who were 'ignorant Christians', other significant Christian aspects appear. Vocationally, Augustine adopted the role of Christian apologist in the opening chapter of *On Music*;⁴⁹ a role familiar to him by the second year at Thagaste. Later in the work, he engaged in commentary on scripture, also something which he had begun to practice earlier at Thagaste.⁵⁰ Immediately following upon *On Music*, Augustine adopted the position of Christian teacher in *On True Religion* to a new degree in presenting a synthesis of his understanding of the Christian religion.⁵¹ This was a natural development from his previous Christian activities but was made possible by the consolidation and development of his Christian understanding as reflected in *On Music*.

The Spiritual Framework of the Religious Life

Although the Thagaste community was not a 'monastery', the lack of an explicit or regularized structure of life there (let alone a *regula*) should not be taken to imply a less committed attempt to pursue the religious/spiritual life. Specifically, Augustine set out a framework of practical instruction for Christian living in *On Music* book six (6.11.29f.). Chapter 6.11.29, for example, exhorts the reader:

may we not be envious of things lesser than ourselves, and let us order ourselves, with our God and Lord helping, between those things which are below us and those which are above us, so that we are not troubled by inferior things, but delight only in higher things. Indeed, delight is like the weight of the soul. Therefore, delight orders the soul. 'For where your treasure will be, there your heart will be also' [Mt. 6.21].⁵²

⁴⁶ cf. ch. 4, p. 178-179.

⁴⁷ this framework is outlined in the following discussion.

⁴⁸ this 'change of mind' is discussed in full below, see p. 203-208.

⁴⁹ *mus.* 6.1.1.

⁵⁰ *mus.* 6.5.14; 6.7.19; and 6.16.52. Augustine took on this 'occupation' most obviously at Thagaste in his commentary on Genesis, *Gn. a. Man.* (c. 389), where the roles of apologist and commentator/teacher were combined.

⁵¹ see discussion below, p. 208f. (esp. 224-228).

⁵² *Non ergo inuideamus inferioribus quam nos sumus, nosque ipsos inter illa quae infra nos sunt, et illa quae supra nos sunt, ita Deo et Domino nostro opitulante ordinemus, ut inferioribus non*

Life at Thagaste, and in general, was to be directed toward God and dependent on God's help; this is in accordance with scripture. The first step in this direction consisted in properly motivating and orienting oneself towards heavenly things from worldly things. Practically, the danger of being troubled by inferior worldly things must be avoided. *On Music* chapter 6.11.32 notes that the 'life of opinion (imagination)', which is at 'the entrance of error', 'is to regard them [*phantasiai*]' as known and actually perceived'.⁵³ For Augustine, to elevate material things to the focus of the mind in the imagination was contradictory to the proper spiritual focus of life. Chapter 6.11.33 explains how humanity naturally suffers in a state given over to temporal things, but that God in his mercy has made a way of escape with the happy result that one's whole life may turn its focus to God. To keep this focus requires action against those things which would avert it. Thus, Augustine proceeded to list (*mus.* 6.12.39) the four things which 'turn the soul away from the contemplation of eternal things, distracting its attention with the care (concerns) of sensible pleasure'. The first thing which mis-directs the soul is 'the love of acting on (orienting towards) the successive passions of the body'; the second is 'the love of operating on bodies' – this turns the soul away and 'makes it restless'; '*phantasiai* and phantasms' comprise the third thing; and 'finally, the love of the most empty knowledge of such things turns [the soul] away'. From each of these 'curiosity is born which is hostile to security [freedom from care] by its very name of concern [*curae*], and in its emptiness quite without truth' (*mus.* 6.12.39).⁵⁴ These four dangerous loves create a framework against which one's spiritual/religious life must be developed.⁵⁵

offendamus, solis autem superioribus delectemur. Delectatio quippe quasi pondus est animae. Delectatio ergo ordinat animam. 'Ubi enim erit thesaurus tuus, ibi erit et cor tuum' (Mt. 6.21). PL 32. 1179.

⁵³ *Haec igitur memoria quaecumque de motibus animi tenet, qui aduersus passiones corporis acti sunt, [phantasiai] graece uocantur, ... quas pro cognitis habere atque pro perceptis opinabilis uita est, constituta in ipso erroris introitu. PL 32. 1180.* There are a number of variants given in the *PL* 32 (p. 1180 n. 1) for '*opinabilis*' (e.g. '*... opinabilis uita est ...*'; '*pro certis opinatis uita est ...*'; '*opinans*'; and '*opinatius*'). The sense I have taken conforms to that of Taliaferro, *FC* 4 (1947), 357.

⁵⁴ *Amor igitur agendi aduersus succedentes passiones corporis sui, auertit animam a contemplatione aeternorum, sensibilis uoluptatis cura eius auocans intentionem: hoc autem agit occursoribus numeris. Auertit etiam amor de corporibus operandi, et inquietam facit: hoc autem agit progressoribus numeris. Auertunt phantasiae atque phantasmata: et haec agit recordabilibus numeris. Auertit denique amor uanissimae cognitionis talium rerum: et hoc agit sensualibus numeris, quibus insunt quasi regulae quaedam artis imitatione gaudentes: et ex his curiositas nascitur ipso curae nomine inimica securitati, et uanitate imposita ueritatis. PL 32. 1184.*

⁵⁵ it is worth noting some possible antitheses to the four lesser loves: 1. responding to bodily passion points to control/restraint of body; 2. focusing on or delighting in material things points to moderation and possibly sharing things in community; 3. the elevation of the material into the mind in memory points toward contemplation on scriptures and God; and 4. the antithesis of vain knowledge is spiritual understanding (in humility) where the goal is God.

Augustine's discussion of how one ought to live continued with a discussion of the virtues (and their opposites). He placed pride at the root of the various 'loves' which turn the soul aside from its proper focus: 'But the general love of doing that which turns [the soul] away from truth, arises from pride, in which vice the soul chooses to imitate God rather than to serve God' (*mus.* 6.12.40).⁵⁶

Therefore, to swell up with pride is to go forth into externals and ... to become empty, which is to be less and less. And what is it to advance into externals, other than to throw away [abandon] the inmost things, *i.e.* to make God distant from oneself, not in spatial distance, but in condition of mind? (*mus.* 6.12.40).⁵⁷

One of the results of pride which concerned Augustine was the danger that the 'appetite of the soul is to have other souls under it ... rational ones, *i.e.* its neighbors, its companions and partners under the same law' (*mus.* 6.13.41).⁵⁸ For the spiritual one engaged in the spiritual edification of companions there was a real risk of being drawn into pride by controlling others.⁵⁹ Contrary to a soul ensnared by pride, in his discussion of question 30 in 83 *Questions* (on whether everything had been created for human use), Augustine summarized the rational activity of a virtuous soul:

Thus perfect human reason, which is called virtue, uses firstly itself to understand God, so that it may enjoy him by whom it was made. It also uses other rational living beings for company, and non-rational [beings] for dominion. And it directs its life to this – that it may enjoy God, for thus it is blessed (made happy). Thus [perfect reason] uses itself. Which [use] surely brings misery through pride, if it is directed to itself and not to God. It also uses bodies; some that need to be vivified to confer good, for thus it uses its own body; some to accept or reject for health; some to tolerate to develop patience; some to order for justice; and some to evaluate to gain some evidence of the truth. It also uses those things from which it withholds itself to gain temperance (moderation). Thus it uses all things, both sensible and non-sensible; there is no third type of thing (*diu. qu.* 30).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Generalis uero amor actionis, quae auertit a uero, a superbia proficiscitur, quo uitio Deum imitari, quam Deo seruire anima maluit.* PL 32. 1184. Augustine supports this point by citing 'holy scripture', in this case Sirach 10.14 and 15.9-10.

⁵⁷ *Quare superbia intumescere, hoc illi est in extima progredi, et ut ita dicam, inanescere, quod est minus minusque esse. Progredi autem in extima, quid est aliud quam intima proicere; id est, longe a se facere Deum, non locorum spatio, sed mentis affectu?* PL 32. 1185.

⁵⁸ *Iste autem animae appetitus est sub se habere alias animas; non pecorum, quas diuino iure concessum est, sed rationales, id est, proximas suas, et sub eadem lege socias atque consortes.* PL 32. 1185. In Augustine's neo-Platonic perspective: 'God alone is able to operate upon rational souls, not through the body, but through himself. Still, the condition of sin is such, that souls are permitted to have some effect on other souls, moving them by signifying through each other's bodies either by natural signs, such as is nodding or looking, or with normal [agreed] signs such as words' (*mus.* 6.13.41: *Sed operari de animis rationalibus, non per corpus, sed per seipsum, solus Deus potest. Peccatorum tamen conditione fit, ut permittantur animae de animis aliquid agere, significando eas mouentes per alterutra corpora, uel naturalibus signis, sicut est uultus uel nutus, uel placitis, sicut sunt uerba.* PL 32. 1185).

⁵⁹ control which was all the more serious for taking place in the realm of the spiritual.

⁶⁰ *Perfecta igitur hominis ratio, quae uirtus uocatur, utitur primo se ipsa ad intellegendum deum, ut eo fruatur a quo etiam facta est; utitur etiam ceteris rationalibus animantibus ad societatem, inrationalibus ad eminentiam. Utam etiam suam ad id refert, ut fruatur deo; ita enim beata est. Ergo et se ipsa utitur. Quae profecto inchoat miseriam per superbiam, si ad se ipsam, non ad deum referatur. Utitur etiam corporibus quibusdam uiuificantis ad beneficentiam – sic enim utitur suo corpore –*

This quotation shows that the virtuous soul needs other people to relate to, in close fellowship and in general, in order to be fashioned according to God's design, and to enjoy him. It also suggests (along with other following statements) Augustine's personal fear of leadership positions while at Thagaste. The proper function of reason is to enable understanding and enjoyment of God; but if reason acts for itself it submits to pride and brings harm upon itself. Anyone could fall victim to the dangers of pride, especially someone of spiritual understanding or a teacher. Someone in a leadership position would be even more susceptible to the common condition Augustine noted in which 'by these numbers and motions by which souls act upon [other] souls, by striving after honors and praise they are turned away from the sight of that pure and unadulterated truth' (*mus.* 6.13.41).⁶¹ This danger is highlighted by the contrasting sentence which follows this comment and which contains Augustine's hope, the happiness of the soul: 'For God alone honors the soul, making it blessed in secret as it lives righteously and piously in his presence'.⁶² Fundamentally, real blessing is not in the things of this world but is internal. The honor of such blessing comes from God, in contrast with the hazardous potential of seeking visible honors for oneself – something which Augustine thought a position of controlling (or leading) other souls might engender. Thus, in the later Thagaste years, Augustine probably would have preferred an unofficial position as a servant of God in which to pursue a right and pious life of godly love rather than any kind of leadership position which would increase the danger of pride.⁶³

Several other aspects of the sixth book of *On Music* encourage the suggestion that Augustine was quite wary of leadership positions. One was a concern to avoid busyness.⁶⁴ Activities which are determined by the chaos of the world or by others who lack the goal (or tools) of the spiritual life (but for whom one is responsible) can overwhelm the soul with distraction.⁶⁵ After a series of comments about the sinful soul's propensity to control others and the effects of this on the memory (which as a

quibusdam assumendis uel respuendis ad ualitudinem, quibusdam tolerandis ad patientiam, quibusdam ordinandis ad iustitiam, quibusdam considerandis ad aliquod ueritatis documentum; utitur etiam his a quibus se abstinet ad temperantiam. Ita omnibus et sensis et non sensis utitur; nec aliquid tertium est. CCL 54A. 39-40. The progression of control, moderation, and the direction of all things towards spiritual progress is again noteworthy.

⁶¹ *Et his igitur numeris et motibus quibus animae ad animas agunt, honores laudesque appetendo auertuntur a perspectione purae illius et sincerae ueritatis. PL 32. 1185.*

⁶² *Solus enim honorat Deus animam beatam faciens in occulto coram se iuste et pie uiuentem. PL 32. 1185; cf. uera rel 6.11* for admiration of those within the church who cared not for their visible status (or even reputation) but were willing to be crowned for their faith secretly.

⁶³ he claimed as much in *s.* 355.2 (see below n. 283 for text).

⁶⁴ *mus.* 6.14.48.

⁶⁵ *mus.* 6.13.42.

result 'boils up in tumultuous fashion with the *phantasias* and phantasms of these acts'),⁶⁶ Augustine asked rhetorically, 'With the soul having been entangled in so many and such great concerns, what surprise is it if it is turned away from contemplation of the truth?' (*mus.* 6.13.42).⁶⁷ The orientation of the soul in peaceful focus on God stood a great chance of being disturbed by proximity to those with lesser focus and to positions of distracting or prideful responsibility.

The next section of *On Music* begins with an interchange between master and disciple that presents Augustine's contrasting paradigm for the religious life, namely, 'that action which is divinely commanded whereby the soul, purified and unburdened, may fly back to rest, and enter into the joy of its Lord' (*mus.* 6.14.43).⁶⁸ He continued to describe the divine instruction:

M. What more do you think I ought to say here, when the divine scriptures in so many volumes and endowed with such authority and sanctity, urge nothing else for us but that we love our God and Lord with our whole heart and whole soul and whole mind; and that we should love our neighbor just as ourselves? [*cf.* Mt. 22.37-39] There is no doubt that we will be cleansed if we refer all those motions and numbers of human action to this end. Is that not so?

D. Indeed it is, but how quickly one hears this, and how difficult and arduous it is to do (*mus.* 6.14.43).⁶⁹

The guiding principle for Augustine's ideal practice of life was the great commandment. Augustine did not adopt the extreme position of seeking to deny any contact with the world, but he was determined to submit all actions – philosophical inquiry, developing skills, and, it is reasonable to assume, vocation – to the pursuit of the great commandment, the pursuit of a proper individual spiritual life before God. Since he had already begun to attempt living in this way, Augustine did not underestimate the difficulty of the task. He was hopeful, however, that the goal of spiritual understanding and experience of God could be achieved. This is seen in his ensuing discussion where the reader is reminded of how easy it ought to be to focus the soul on God to whom nothing else is comparable. This ease, he explained, was the meaning of

⁶⁶ *Et hos utrosque motus excipit memoria, et recordabiles facit, simili modo in phantasiis et phantasmatis actionum talium tumultuosissime exaestuans.* PL 32. 1185.

⁶⁷ *His tot et tantis intentionibus anima implicata, quid mirum, si a contemplatione ueritatis auertitur?* PL 32. 1185; see also *mus.* 6.14.48.

⁶⁸ *Quid ergo restat? An ut, quoniam sicut potuimus iniquationem et aggrauationem animae considerauimus, uideamus quatenus illi actio diuinitus imperetur, qua purgata atque exonerata reuolet ad quietem, et intret in gaudium Domini sui?* PL 32. 1186.

⁶⁹ *M. Quid me putas hinc diutius debere dicere, cum diuinae Scripturae tot uoluminibus et tanta auctoritate et sanctitate praeditis, nihil nobiscum aliud agant, nisi ut diligamus Deum et Dominum nostrum ex toto corde, ex tota anima, et ex tota mente; et diligamus proximum nostrum tanquam nosmetipsos? Ad hunc igitur finem si omnes illos humanae actionis motus, numerosque referamus, sine dubitatione mundabimur. An aliud existimas?*

D. Nihil equidem aliud. Sed quam hoc auditu breue est, tam factu difficile atque arduum. PL 32. 1186.

Christ's statement that 'my yoke is light' (Mt. 11.30).⁷⁰ In contrast to this relative ease,

The love of this world is more wearisome. For, what the soul seeks in it, namely constancy and eternity, it does not find, because by the transience of things [even] the lowest beauty ends, and what in this [transience] imitates constancy is sent by the most high God by means of the soul (*mus.* 6.14.44).⁷¹

These statements about what the Christian ought to love find their complement in a passage, conducive to an ascetic ideal, cited by Augustine from 1 John:

Thus, just as souls have been commanded by the Lord what to love, so through the Apostle John [they are told] what not to love. 'Do not', he says, 'love this world because all things in the world are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and worldly ambition [1 Jn. 2.15-16]' (*mus.* 6.14.44).⁷²

Augustine, whose first objective was the love and enjoyment of God, was wary of anything that would avert this focus of devotion. Any other focus (or love) of life was of pride. His citations of scripture concerning love (positive from Matthew and negative from 1 John respectively) imply that to achieve the love of God one must live in a way consciously directed against competing lesser loves. Augustine was very concerned not to be drawn back to the temptations of the love of the world, especially to 'worldly ambition' in a Christian guise of recognized leadership.⁷³ Fundamentally, the impression created by *On Music* book six is that he had firmly settled on, and had thought through, a framework for the pursuit of the religious life that was ascetic, based on the contrast of the love of God with pride.⁷⁴

Augustine's explanation of the quote from 1 John in *On Music* 6.14.44 is as noteworthy as its citation and shows how the movement even in a discussion of music and numbers⁷⁵ is towards an ideal of moderate and general asceticism.

But what type of person does this seem to be to you, who directs all those numbers which are from the body and against the passions of the body, and which hence are held in the memory, not to carnal pleasure but only to the health of the body? One who channels all those [numbers] which work upon souls connected [to him], or are thrust forward in order to bind souls to him,

⁷⁰ *mus.* 6.14.44.

⁷¹ *Laboriosior est huius mundi amor. Quod enim in illo anima quaerit, constantiam scilicet aeternitatemque, non inuenit: quoniam rerum transitu completur infima pulchritudo, et quod in illa imitatur constantiam, a summo Deo per animam traicitur: quoniam prior est species tantummodo tempore commutabilis, quam ea quae et tempore et locis.* PL 32. 1186.

⁷² *Sicut itaque praeceptum est animis a Domino quid diligant, ita per Joannem apostolum quid non diligant. 'Nolite', inquit, 'diligere mundum: quia omnia quae in mundo sunt, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et ambitio saeculi' (1 Jn. 2.15, 16).* PL 32. 1186.

⁷³ with its danger of pride in a position of controlling others or danger of being in a position to seek human honors and accolades; cf. *ep.* 10.2; see ch. 4, p. 149-150 esp. n. 112.

⁷⁴ such an understanding is apparent in *uera rel.*, cf. below, p. 212f.

⁷⁵ which, to the modern perspective, seems only tangentially related to the religious life. Augustine considered that all good activities lead towards God and increased spiritual understanding/experience; cf. also J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 275.

and which hence inhere in the memory, not to [the sake of] his proud superiority, but the profit of those same souls? One who also uses [numbers], which in both types guard over the senses like moderators and investigators of other transient things, not for [sating] fruitless or pernicious curiosity, but for a necessary approval or disapproval? Does such a person not conduct all these numbers and yet remain unensnared in their traps? Since he chooses the health of the body so that he should not be hindered, and harnesses all these actions for the profit of his neighbor whom, because of the natural bond of common justice, he was commanded to love as himself [cf. Mt. 22.39] (*mus.* 6.14.45).⁷⁶

The goals of control and prudent/modest use of bodies, working for the good of others and not for self (pride), and seeking understanding not vain knowledge nor sating curiosity, are clear in this passage. They come under the principles of striving to be unhindered in one's progress toward the spiritual and living in love for one's neighbors. Thus, Augustine saw a way for a committed person to succeed in the spiritual life with the help of ascetic practice. Moreover, Augustine perceived hope that not only related to his own individual pursuit of the religious life but also to the right relation to others for their benefit.⁷⁷ This hope may well have provided the basis for his future assumption of leadership positions, since he was committed to the education of others and perceived that it was possible to maintain positions of instruction without pride.⁷⁸ However, the presumption of the passage (supported by the wariness of those preceding) is that such an ideal is, if a goal, yet unattained.⁷⁹

Regardless of the implications for Augustine's view of potential leadership positions (in community or in the church) he did have a mental framework for the

⁷⁶ *Sed qualis tibi homo uidetur, qui omnes illos numeros qui sunt de corpore, et aduersus passiones corporis, et qui ex his memoria continentur, non ad carnalem uoluptatem, sed ad salutem tantum corporis refert: omnesque illos qui de adjunctis animis operantur, uel qui ad adiungendas exseruntur, et qui ex his inhaerent memoriae, non ad superbam excellentiam suam, sed ad ipsarum animarum utilitatem redigit: illis etiam qui in utroque genere quasi moderatores exploratoresque caeterorum transeuntium in sensu praesident, non ad superfluam uel perniciosam curiositatem, sed ad necessariam probationem uel improbationem utitur: nonne et istos omnes numeros agit, et nullis eorum laqueis implicatur? Quandoquidem et salutem corporis ut non impediatur eligit, et omnes eas actiones ad utilitatem proximi reuocat, quem propter communis iuris naturale uinculum tanquam seipsum diligere iussus est.* PL 32. 1186-1187.

⁷⁷ C.W. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for his Doctrine of the Church', *Aug. Stud.* 8 (1977), 91-109. Speaking of the apostolic models for various aspects of Augustine's monasticism generally, Brockwell states (p. 100-101), 'The third significant principle of the apostolic model of governance is the responsibility of the strong for the weak. It has been insufficiently emphasized in the literature on Augustine's monasticism. Yet the frequency of his references to this theme, as well as the contexts in which they occur, provide evidence that it was important' (cf. *mor. ecc.* 31.71-73, or even *op. mon.* 37-38).

⁷⁸ cf. the admiration already expressed in *mor. ecc.* for those who were able to lead coenobitic communities without *superbia*, and for the lifestyle in these communities in which none of the members were 'puffed up with pride' (for texts, see ch. 4, n. 101-102).

⁷⁹ e.g. the disciple's response that follows this quote from the master ('You talk of some great and truly most cultivated man') does not connote attainment of this ideal (*D. Magnum quemdam uirum et uere humanissimum praedicat.* PL 32. 1187). Augustine had already engaged in Christian apologetic, scriptural exegesis, and instructional exhortation by 390/391, but only in his writings and within his small community of fellow travelers and dependents. There is no suggestion before this period that Augustine desired (or even thought much about) an official post in the church and there is certainly no indication of specific office in the general Christian hierarchy or community.

relations of his spiritual life. In *On Music* 6.14.46, he continued and summarized the soul's proper relationship to God and others:

That [soul] possesses order which is loving what is above itself, *i.e.* God, with its whole self and its fellow souls as itself. Indeed, by this virtue of love it orders inferior things, and it is not soiled by them. What does defile it is not evil because even the body is a creature of God and is adorned with its own beauty, although the lowest [type].⁸⁰ But it is contemned by comparison with the dignity of the soul; just as the value of gold becomes debased when mixed even with the most refined silver. Therefore any numbers which are produced by our penal mortality we will not exempt from the creations of divine providence, since they are beautiful in their own way. Neither shall we love them, as though by enjoying such things one might be made blessed. Because they are temporal, we shall be free from them by using them well, like a plank amid the waves – neither rejecting them as burdensome nor embracing them as fixtures. From the love of neighbor which is so highly commanded [of us] there comes a most certain step for us, in order [for us] to cling to God, and not only be held by his ordering but also hold our order unshaken and resolved.⁸¹

The attention to maintaining a life firmly ordered by the love of God and neighbor and focusing on proper control of and action of the soul carries the implication that Augustine would have sought activities and patterns in life that would allow him control over what he did and had to do. He wrote,

Let us place our joy not in the delights of the flesh, nor in the honors and praises of people, nor in exploration (examination) of those things which touch on the body from without, having [instead] God in the inmost place where all we love is fixed and unchangeable (*mus.* 6.14.48).⁸²

Augustine's concern that 'the attention of the soul to the body's part [*i.e.* interest] produces restless busyness; and the love of a particular private task yields the neglect of [God's] universal law' (*mus.* 6.14.48)⁸³ suggests that the lifestyle patterns he achieved and pursued during this period would have placed a priority on personal contemplation and control of the body. Thus, *On Music* illuminates Augustine's concerns to avoid personal busyness, in which state of distraction he might be kept from a proper ordering of earthly pursuits (proper meaning that things were pursued

⁸⁰ cf. also *mus.* 6.11.33 (text and translation in ch. 4, p. 178-179 and n. 258) for this idea.

⁸¹ *Tenet ordinem, seipsa tota diligens quod supra se est, id est Deum, socias autem animas tanquam seipsam. Hac quippe dilectionis uirtute inferiora ordinat, nec ab inferioribus sordidatur. Quod autem illam sordidat, non est malum, quia etiam corpus creatura Dei est, et specie sua quamuis infima decoratur, sed prae animae dignitate contemnitur; sicuti auri dignitas, etiam purgatissimi argenti commixtione sordescit. Quapropter quicumque de nostra quoque poenali mortalitate numeri facti sunt, non eos abdicemus a fabricatione diuinae prouidentiae, cum sint in genere suo pulchri. Neque amemus eos, ut quasi perfruendo talibus beati efficiamur. His etenim, quoniam temporales sunt, tanquam tabula in fluctibus, neque abiiciendo quasi onerosos, neque amplectendo quasi fundatos, sed bene utendo carebimus. A dilectione autem proximi tanta quanta praecipitur, certissimus gradus fit nobis, ut inhaereamus Deo, et non teneamur tantum ordinatione illius, sed nostrum etiam ordinem inconcussum certumque teneamus.* PL 32. 1187.

⁸² *Quamobrem neque in uoluptate carnali, neque in honoribus et laudibus hominum, neque in eorum exploratione quae forinsecus corpus attingunt, nostra gaudia collocemus, habentes in intimo Deum, ubi certum est et incommutabile omne quod amamus.* PL 32. 1188.

⁸³ *Attentio namque animae ad corporis partem inquieta negotia contrahit, et uniuersali lege neglecta priuati cuiusdam operis amor, quod ipsum tamen ab uniuersitate quam Deus regit non potest a lienari. Itaque subditur legibus qui non amat leges.* PL 32. 1188; cf. *mus.* 6.16.53.

out of the love of God, and thus others, and encouraged a proper focus of the soul upon God). While Augustine's active avoidance of clerical positions (*cf. s. 355.1-2, ep. 10.2*) was due in part to a personal preference for ascetic and 'monastic' over episcopal/clerical environments and vocations, his activity also derived from a more general desire to avoid positions of authority. Furthermore, Augustine's desire to retain a significant modicum of leisure in his life would have encouraged his remove from church or community positions of responsibility. This factor (as a natural continuation from the earlier ideal and attraction of classical *otium*) should not be underestimated in the period 390/early 391.⁸⁴ Still, there is indication of willingness to assume larger communal responsibility over leisure where the two conflicted.⁸⁵ Naturally, Augustine was trying to avoid such 'conflicts', yet, he was engaged in his community in instruction (and through correspondence) and understood the need and obligation to use his gifts and time for others.⁸⁶

Hence, book six of *On Music* indirectly presents a theoretical framework and motivation for ascetic practice. That is, it presents the overarching philosophical and theological perspective from which ascetic practice flows: the great commandment paradigm and the proper relation of the soul to God, its own being, other souls, and the world. Augustine also identified certain things that should be the focus of attention for soul and body and other things that ought to be avoided or encountered only in controlled measure. Finally, he gave certain examples of particular activities he envisioned, such as personal contemplation on incorporeal things leading to God (*cf. mus. 6.2.2*). At the end of *On Music* 6.5.8, the ideal of contemplation is pictured as diligent personal conjecture aided by a framework of discussion, but not with an urgency or dependence that would lead to anxiety or doubt about the possibility of understanding.⁸⁷ By the ascetic kind of life, especially by the act of contemplating God,

⁸⁴ discussed, esp. with respect to Thagaste, in ch. 4, p. 149-150.

⁸⁵ one might see the 'recruitment' trip to Hippo in this light; *cf. uita Aug. 3*.

⁸⁶ *uita Aug. 3*: 'And concerning those things which God revealed to him, comprehended in prayer and reflection/meditation, he taught both to those present and those absent by means of his discourse and books' (*Et de his quae sibi Deus cogitanti atque oranti intellecta reuelabat, et praesentes et absentes sermonibus ac libris docebat*. Weiskotten (1919), 44); *cf. also ep. 20.3 and 17* for examples of Augustine's desire and actions to help build up and convert others. See also *ep. 18.1*: 'Let us be stripped of useless cares and clothed with useful ones. For concerning exemption from care, I do not know whether any is to be hoped for in this world' (*O utinam possem assidue tibi aliquid dicere! id autem aliquid est, ut curis exueremur inanibus et curis indueremur utilibus. nam de securitate nescio utrum quicquam in hoc mundo sperandum sit*. CSEL 34.2.1. 44-45). The sense of responsibility for others within the Christian communion is seen most clearly at the very end of *mus.* and later in *uera rel.*, see below, p. 205-207 esp. n. 110, and p. 220-227.

⁸⁷ e.g. also *mus. 6.15.49*, which presents the contemplative ideal of 'thinking intensely on things incorporeal' (*Sed si de rebus incorporeis et eodem modo se semper habentibus, plerumque attentissime cogitantes, si quos forte illo tempore agimus numeros temporales in quolibet corporis motu*. PL 32. 1188; *cf. mus. 6.1.1; retr. 1.11.1*) as something necessary to everyday life: 'How much more, then,

the soul, with its God and Lord helping, extricates itself from the love of an inferior beauty, making war on and killing its own habit which fights against the self. With victory about to be celebrated within itself over the powers of this air, from whose envying and longing to shackle, it escapes to its own stability and fixity – God ... (*mus.* 6.15.50).⁸⁸

By the religious spiritual life he envisaged, Augustine saw that the worldly habits of the self could be overcome and the entanglement of lesser things could be escaped. He explained this process of 'escape to God' in the world in terms of each of the virtues – temperance (*mus.* 15.50; 16.54), fortitude (15.50; 16.54), justice (15.50; 16.53), and prudence (16.51-52). *On Music* 6.16.51 presents a fair summary of this discussion:

But now I seek that which was agreed earlier between us, that prudence was that by which the soul understands where it should rest. To that place [the soul] raises itself up through temperance, that is, the conversion of love for God, which is called charity, and aversion from this world, which also is attended by fortitude and justice. I seek whether you think that when it will have reached the fruit of its delight and exertion with perfect sanctification, even by that perfect vivification of its body, and with the crowds of phantasms wiped from the memory, it will begin to live near to God for God alone, when it will have fulfilled what is promised to us by divinity in this way, 'Beloved, now we are sons of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know when he will have appeared we shall be like him since we shall see him as he is' [1 Jn. 3.2].⁸⁹

Each of the virtues is presented in connection with the aversion of the world and/or the right focus of the love of God. They afford a mental construct by which Augustine understood the principles of the religious spiritual life. Augustine went on to restate the condition of the worldly life: 'the soul lapses by pride into certain action of its own power, and neglecting universal law has fallen into doing certain things private to itself ... this is called turning away from God' (*mus.* 6.16.53).⁹⁰ In immediate contrast to this, Augustine summarized the soul's proper action, saying, 'it fixes its love in God

intent on one God and clear truth, as it is said "face to face", will we rejoice, feeling no disquiet, in the numbers by which we move [our] bodies?" (*quanto ergo tunc magis in unum Deum, et perspicuam intenti ueritatem, ut dictum est, facie ad faciem, numeros quibus agimus corpora, nulla inquietudine sentiemus, et gaudebimus?* PL 32. 1188-1189).

⁸⁸ *Sed haec actio qua sese anima, opitulante Deo et Domino suo, ab amore inferioris pulchritudinis extrahit, debellans atque interficiens aduersus se militantem consuetudinem suam, ea uictoria triumphatura in semetipsa de potestatibus aeris huius, quibus inuidentibus et praepedire cupientibus, euolat ad suam stabilitatem et firmamentum Deum; nonne tibi uidetur ea esse uirtus quae temperantia dicitur?* PL 32. 1189.

⁸⁹ *Sed illud iam quaero, cum prudentiam superius eam esse constiterit inter nos, qua intelligit anima ubi ei consistendum sit, quo sese attollit per temperantiam, id est, conuersionem amoris in Deum, quae charitas dicitur, et auersionem ab hoc saeculo, quam etiam fortitudo et iustitia comitantur; utrum existimes cum ad suae dilectionis et conatus fructum perfecta sanctificatione peruenerit, perfecta etiam uiuificatione illa corporis sui, et deletis de memoria phantasmatum turbis, apud Deum ipsum solo Deo uiuere coeperit, cum impletum fuerit, quod diuinitus nobis hoc modo promittitur: 'Dilectissimi, nunc filii Dei sumus, et nondum apparuit quid erimus. Scimus quia cum apparuerit, similes illi erimus, quoniam uidebimus eum sicuti est' (1 Jn. 3.2).* PL 32. 1189.

⁹⁰ *superbia labi animam ad actiones quasdam potestatis suae, et uniuersali lege neglecta in agenda quaedam priuata cecidisse, quod dicitur apostatare a Deo.* PL 32. 1190.

and lives most temperately and chastely and securely away from all filth'.⁹¹ Thus, the virtues find their fulfillment in ascetic terms: 'then in this contemplation, sanctification, impassability, and ordering [of the soul] are those four virtues consummated and perfected' (*mus.* 6.16.55).⁹² The hierarchy of virtues exists under the overarching framework of love, the motivation for all religious and ascetic activity. They represent the means by which one pursues perfect sanctification and vivification of soul and body out of love for God.⁹³ Thus, Augustine achieved an integration in understanding of the means of spiritual communion with God with a lifestyle (*i.e.* ascetic) needed to facilitate this communion.

A Shift in Augustine's View of Christian Community

At the very end of *On Music*, statements about the spiritual hierarchy of different Christians anticipate Augustine's pursuit of a tolerant, more common collective asceticism.⁹⁴ In the years immediately following his conversion, Augustine held an

⁹¹ ... *nonne tibi uidetur amorem suum figere in Deo, et ab omni inquiramento temperatissime et castissime et securissime uiuere ...* PL 32. 1190.

⁹² the pursuit of which leads to 'eternal life'. *Haec ergo contemplatio, sanctificatio, impassibilitas, ordinatio eius, aut illae sunt quatuor uirtutes perfectae atque consummatae; aut ne de nominibus cum res conueniant, frustra laboremus, pro istis uirtutibus, quibus constituta in laboribus utitur anima, tales quaedam potentiae in aeterna ei uita sperandae sunt.* PL 32. 1191; cf. also *mus.* 6.16.52, where in answer to another perspective from the 'disciple' the 'master' says, 'Your reply so far is not absurd. And I do not deny it has seemed this way to certain learned men. But I, consulting those books whose authority none surpasses, found it was said thus, "Taste and see, because the Lord is sweet" [Ps. 33.9]. ... I judge that this is what is done in those virtues which cleanse the soul with conversion. For the love of temporal things is not purged, unless by the other sweetness of eternal things' (*M. Non usquequaque absurda est responsio tua; et quibusdam doctis uisum hoc esse, non nego. Sed ego consulens Libros, quos nulla antecellit auctoritas, ita inuenio dictum esse: 'Gustate et uidete, quoniam suavis est Dominus' (Ps. 33.9). Quod apostolus etiam Petrus sic interposuit: 'Si tamen gustastis, quoniam suavis est Dominus' (1 Pet. 2.3). Hoc esse arbitror quod agitur in his uirtutibus quae ipsa conuersione animam purgant. Non enim amor temporalium rerum expugnaretur, nisi aliqua suauitate aeternarum.* PL 32. 1189-1190); cf. *mor. ecc.* 15.25 (esp.)-16.27.

⁹³ *mus.* 6.16.51, cf. n. 89.

⁹⁴ from his earliest reports of ascetics and ascetic communities Augustine seems most attracted to a balanced (non-extreme) form of ascetic practice (*e.g.* *mor. ecc.* 23.42 or *mor. ecc.* 33.71; cf. *ord.* 1.1.2). For example, he was not attracted to a hermitic existence, though he admired anchorites. This balance is not what is meant by a relaxed asceticism here. Rather, the insight is into a relaxation in Augustine's view of who could achieve what he considered the highest ascetic ideals to include those who were not intellectual spirituals. A criterion for participation in Augustine's community to this point had probably been interest in spiritual understanding and the tools (education) needed to acquire it. This changed, at least in theory, at the end of book six. The line of Augustine's own discovery of incorporeal reality at Milan (which triumphed intellectually over all his past perspectives), his bias against those who were uninterested in education or in spiritual understanding at Cassiciacum, his attention to those 'with him' not averse to studies of the liberal arts between Milan and Thagaste, his admiration of the learned men of the church over the ignorant in *mor. ecc.*, or of the *spiritales* over the *animales* in *Gn. a. Man.*, seems to break with *mus.* (and with *uera rel.*). Augustine now saw that even the uneducated can come to spiritual experience of God, as it were, on the wings of charity. To come into the spiritual presence of the one God while on earth no longer required the use of reason or of corporeal steps by which incorporeal things were reached; of course, complete devotion remained necessary (see discussion following).

elitist view of humanity and the Christian communion. There were those able to reach true understanding through philosophical consideration and contemplation (*i.e.* reason, albeit having been set in the right direction, as it were, by reliable authority), and there were others in much greater numbers who had to rely on authority, by belief, for access to truth which they could not find or grasp by understanding.⁹⁵ This dichotomy is implied in *On Music* as early as the first book where Augustine said,

For great men, even if they are ignorant of music, wish to be one with the common people, who are not very different from cattle and whose number is enormous; which thing they do most modestly and wisely (discreetly) ... (*mus.* 1.4.5).⁹⁶

In a contrast between the skilled and the learned later in the same chapter, the hierarchical idea appears again: 'for it is normal for me to hear that in [matters of] operating or any kind of binding limbs, and things which are carried out with hand and knife, doctors, most learned men, often are surpassed by the more ignorant' (*mus.* 1.4.9).⁹⁷ For Augustine, the value of factual knowledge or bodily skill was thus concluded to be demonstrably lower than understanding. Because the body does something bodily well, even something fairly technical, this does not mean that one has acted with understanding (in principle the same would apply to things religious like extreme ascetic practice). Therefore, actions lacking in understanding are, at this stage of the work, considered by Augustine of a lesser order than things done spiritually (either in the soul alone, or in concert with the body moved rightly by soul).

The context of the discussion in *On Music* (pertaining for the most part, often technically, to rhythm and numbers) does not outline Augustine's theological or religious appraisal of the 'common people'. Although, from other early works, Augustine granted that such common folk could access truth (by coming to the authority of Christ in the church, *i.e.* belief),⁹⁸ he was often challenged by the fact that they were successfully pursuing the religious life while he was struggling unsuccessfully with the flesh.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he saw himself as superior, being one able and eager to grasp spiritual things.¹⁰⁰ He did not associate regularly with such

⁹⁵ cf. *ord.* 2.9.26, 27; 2.11.30; and *mor. ecc.* 1.10.17; at least in this life. In these writings Augustine seems to hold the opinion that such ones could gain understanding after death.

⁹⁶ *Nam magni uiri, etsi musicam nesciunt, aut congruere plebi uolunt, quae non multum a pecoribus distat, et cuius ingens est numerus, quod modestissime ac prudentissime faciunt (sed de hoc nunc disserendi locus non est); aut post magnas curas relaxandi ac reparandi animi gratia moderatissime ab iis aliquid uoluptatis assumitur. Quam interdum sic capere modestissimum est; ab ea uero capi uel interdum, turpe atque indecorum est.* PL 32. 1086.

⁹⁷ *D. nam et medicos audire soleo doctissimos uiros, saepe in secandis, uel quoquo modo comprimendis membris, in eo quod manu ac ferro fiat, ab imperitiis antecedi.* PL 32. 1088.

⁹⁸ cf. *Acad.* 3.20.43 and n. 95, above.

⁹⁹ *conf.* 8.6.14-8.7.16 and 8.8.19.

¹⁰⁰ in fact, he found their contented ignorance baffling, not understanding how such could be happy (cf. *ch.* 1, p. 23-24), and even embarrassing as a Catholic Christian (*e.g.* *mor. ecc.* 10.17; 34.75).

simple, seemingly contentedly ignorant people lest it distract his pursuit of understanding by reason.¹⁰¹ The distinction between those able to grasp incorporeal reality and those unable to do so continued in *On True Religion*. For example, this distinction is clearly seen in chapter 16.32: 'And this natural discipline [where the 'body freely serves the soul and the soul is subject to God'] is worthy of the complete faith of less intelligent Christians, and for the intelligent [those who understand spiritually] it is free from all error'.¹⁰² These two groups correspond to two larger groups in humankind: 'the small number of the learned and the multitude of the unlearned' (*uera rel.* 14.27).¹⁰³ The written discourses from Cassiciacum, Rome, and Thagaste all suggest that any 'religious community' of which Augustine would be part would have to give at least some place to philosophical and liberal pursuits, *i.e.* consist of people educated, or appreciating or seeking to gain education, bent on spiritual understanding.

This hierarchical view, however, was tempered and then virtually inverted in *On Music* book six, probably indicating a shift in Augustine's personal view of viable communities in 390. At the beginning of the book, Augustine explained that the first five books of the work had been

undertaken for none other than adolescents, or for persons of whatever age whom God has given good natural [mental] ability, [so that] not hastily but by certain steps they should, led by reason, be torn away from the carnal senses and from the carnal letters, to which it is difficult for them not to cling; and should cleave to the one God and Lord of all things, who governs over human minds with no nature interposed, by love of the unchangeable truth (*mus.* 6.1.1).¹⁰⁴

Certainly, this is not a radical revision of his former view of humanity. However, Augustine did begin to speak about certain issues of understanding in such a way that held out hope for all those ensnared in carnality.¹⁰⁵ This comment is immediately followed by a restatement of the overarching purpose of the book, the familiar goal of pointing out what one ought to do 'if he is among the number of spiritual men' (*mus.*

¹⁰¹ cf. discussion in ch. 1, p. 22-24; ch. 3, p. 82-83; and ch. 4, p. 149-150.

¹⁰² *quamque facile corpus animae seruiat, cum ipsa subicitur deo ... Et haec est disciplina naturalis Christianis minus intelligentibus plena fide digna, intelligentibus autem omni errore purgata.* CCL 32. 207.

¹⁰³ *Et hoc quidem ita manifestum est, ut nulla hinc doctorum paucitas, nulla indoctorum turba dissentiat.* CCL 32. 204.

¹⁰⁴ *M. Satis diu pene atque adeo plane pueriliter per quinque libros in uestigiis numerorum ad moras temporum pertinentium morati sumus: ... quem [labor] non ob aliud suscipiendum putauimus, nisi ut adolescentes, uel cuiuslibet aetatis homines, quos bono ingenio donauit Deus, non praepropere, sed quibusdam gradibus a sensibus carnis atque a carnalibus litteris, quibus eos non haerere difficile est, duce ratione auellerentur, atque uni Deo et Domino rerum omnium, qui humanis mentibus nulla natura interposita praesidet, incommutabilis ueritatis amore adhaerescerent.* PL 32. 1161.

¹⁰⁵ cf. *retr.* 1.11.1. Those who can be led by reason are the primary beneficiaries of the work, but the end goal of adhering to truth by love makes no mention of having achieved spiritual *understanding*.

6.1.1).¹⁰⁶ Book six is directed to those who have gained 'incorporeal' understanding by means of the 'corporeal' matters discussed in the first five books (*cf. mus.* 5.15.23), but there is a sense that Augustine was thinking about how the work related to simple Christians (*i.e.* not *spiritaes*).¹⁰⁷ In the closing paragraph of *On Music*, an interesting view of 'ignorant Christians' is encountered which is in marked contrast to the view illustrated earlier in the work (and in Augustine's earlier writings).¹⁰⁸

I have discussed with you what little I was able on such great things. And if any read this discourse of ours once written down, they should know that these things have been written by¹⁰⁹ those much more infirm than those who, following the authority of the two Testaments, venerate the consubstantial and immutable Trinity of the one supreme God, from whom, through whom, and in whom are all things; *i.e.* those who adore and worship [the Trinity] by believing, hoping, and loving. For they [*i.e.* the latter] are cleansed not with flashing of human reasoning, but with the vigorous bright blazing fire of charity. As for us, moreover, so long as we judge that we should not neglect those whom the heretics deceive with false promises of reason and knowledge, we proceed more slowly, through paying attention to the actual paths, than those holy men who by flying [over them] do not deign to notice them. We would not venture to do this unless we saw that many pious sons of the best of mothers, the Catholic church, who in youthful studies had acquired sufficiently the skill of speaking and arguing, had also done so out of the same necessity of refuting the heretics (*mus.* 6.17.59).¹¹⁰

On Music is presented as deriving from those who understand spiritually. Yet, since such ones (*i.e.* spirituals in understanding) have to search out understanding by reason (and have to battle in this world for the explanation of truth), they do not reach God so quickly or experience him spiritually so fully on earth. In contrast, those who cannot,

¹⁰⁶ *si tamen de numero spiritualium uirorum iste fuerit.* PL 32. 1162; *cf. mus.* 6.14.45 and 6.15.50.

¹⁰⁷ as noted in ch. 4, Augustine's sensitivity to write for the education (and not just defense) of simpler Catholic Christians emerged at Thagaste (see *e.g. Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2 and ch. 4, p. 142-144, esp. n. 78, 79); but in *mus.* book six Augustine was presenting spiritual discourse; he was not writing for the uneducated or the philosophically insensitive. Still, the distinction between the spiritual and the carnal is not nearly so sharp as in *Gn. a. Man.*

¹⁰⁸ C. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 45, details the more general 'marked change in emphasis' here.

¹⁰⁹ or 'for'. Taliaferro (*FC* 4 (1947), 378) and Harrison (*Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 45) take 'infirmioribus' with the ablative 'by' (which seems supported by the contrast later in the passage between the two ways of traversing the 'path' to God). Yet, the reading could equally be the dative 'for'. There is a significant difference between the two readings but not for the point of the of the passage drawn in the argument here. Both Augustine and his primary readers are to come to spiritual understanding, and it is this whole exercise, while seen as good and necessary, which is now not the exclusive nor even most direct means of coming to God in this life.

¹¹⁰ *Quae potui et sicut potui de tantis tantillus tecum contuli. Sermonem autem hunc nostrum mandatum litteris si qui legunt, sciant multo infirmioribus haec esse scripta, quam sunt illi qui unius summi Dei consubstantialitatem et incommutabilem Trinitatem, ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia duorum Testamentorum auctoritatem secuti uenerantur et colunt eam credendo, sperando et diligendo. Hi enim non scintillantibus humanis ratiocinationibus, sed ualidissimo et flagrantissimo charitatis igne purgantur. Nos autem dum negligendos esse non existimamus quos haeretici rationis et scientiae fallaci pollicitatione decipiunt; tardius incedimus, consideratione ipsarum uiarum, quam sancti uiri qui eas uolando non dignantur attendere. Quod tamen facere non auderemus, nisi multos pios Ecclesiae catholicae matris optima filios, qui puerilibus studiis loquendi ac disserendi facultatem quantum satis est consecuti essent, eadem refellendorum haeticorum necessitate fecisse uideremus.* PL 32. 1193-1194; *cf. uera rel.* 24.45.

or do not, understand spiritual things with the mind but live close to God come into his presence the more quickly by devotion undelayed by spiritual meditation. *On Music* still aimed at those who are able to become spiritual; the need for there to be ones who could explain the truth of God, Catholic truth, against heretics (and for the defense of the simple faithful) is grounded here in the historical precedent of previous holy and learned sons of the Catholic church. Thus, Augustine and his mode of spiritual life followed the example of previous holy and learned Catholics and shared their responsibility to protect those in the communion easily deceived by heretics. He did this, as they, for the sake of the mother church. However, an alternative route to spiritual experience of God than pious understanding of authority by reason is now visible, namely, to believe the spiritual truth about God (*i.e.* the 'consubstantial, immutable Trinity', creator and sustainer of all) and to cling to God himself and to the authority he has given by faith, hope, and above all, charity. Augustine now understood that being uneducated or incapable of spiritual understanding by reason did not mean that one was a lower level believer. Two categories of spirituals now appeared in his writings: those who understood incorporeal reality and ascended to God by reason, intellectual spirituals, and those who were raised into the spiritual presence of God by complete devotion, devoted spirituals.¹¹¹ By a religious life of complete devotion to God, the Christian faith held the potential of spiritual equality, in experience, for all regardless of ability or background.

This conception of spiritual potential marks a definite shift, if not a reversal, in the way Augustine viewed those who, either by choice or due to a lack of skill or ability, did not pursue by reason the understanding of the authority they have accepted (of Christ, the Christian scriptures, and the church). Augustine communicated a strong recognition of the value of those who lack this ability or inclination and their potential value in the larger body of Christians – surely with implications for his own thoughts about local communities and groupings. His statements show a softening of earlier biases that had probably formed one part of his hesitation to found an open ascetic community.¹¹² Augustine's sense of responsibility to the larger Christian communion is also manifest within a conception of the universal teaching aspect of the church. He

¹¹¹ both of these were, of course, 'devoted'. The designations used here are inadequate and do not capture the sense of 'overlap' which Augustine would have had between them (*e.g.* the good possibility that some of those 'devoted' would come to spiritual understanding, or the fact that all those with intellectual perception ought to be inspired fully by charity as well). Nevertheless, these designations must suffice here.

¹¹² of course, this quote from *mus.* also sheds significant light on Augustine's view of the apologetic occupation (for the first time defending his role from precedent), the nature of the Catholic church (as mother and universal in time as well as place), and the connection between the authority to the church and the scriptures. The importance of these aspects has already been drawn out sufficiently in previous discussion, and their coalescence in 390 will be demonstrated in the discussion below.

was able to address 'heretics' with reason, and therefore, following the example of earlier Christians with this 'gift', had to do so for the sake of weaker Christians even if it made him 'slower' in his approach to God – that is, distracted from his spiritual religious life. In summary, the personal pursuit of the religious life may have been the single greatest factor in moving Augustine along the road towards monastic activity.¹¹³ Yet, many elements led to that result with Augustine's recognition of the importance of relations to the general Christian community and the potential of all of its constituents. Overall, *On Music* anticipates the religious synthesis and the 'monastic' direction, with its balanced asceticism, which Augustine will move toward in 391, and establishes the framework in which such developments will occur.

THE RELIGIOUS SYNTHESIS OF 390

The link between *On True Religion* and *On Music* is not as tenuous as it might at first appear. In his commentary on the *Confessions*, J.J. O'Donnell's excursus on the 'Liberale Disciplinæ' traces Augustine's 'high view of the *disciplinæ*' through the 'period 386 to 391'.¹¹⁴ Concerning *On True Religion*, he commented,

The last work containing this association of ideas concerning the *disciplinæ* in a form recognizably continuing that of Cassiciacum is *vera rel.*, written at Thagaste before Augustine was ordained at Hippo in 391. Here the integration of the ideal into an ecclesiastical setting is almost complete, esp. with reference to sacramental practice [citing *uera rel.* 17.33].¹¹⁵

The discussion of *On Music* focuses attention on the period following Augustine's conversion highlighting the continuity of much of his thought between 386 and 390. TeSelle notes, however, 'Despite this continuity with Augustine's earlier thought, there seems to be a new urgency in the writings about 390 and 391'.¹¹⁶ Similarly, O'Donnell has commented in specific reference to *On True Religion*:

everything Augustine wrote from his conversion in 386 down to but not including *vera rel.* on the threshold of ordination can be interpreted either as anti-Manichean or pro-*disciplinæ*. *Vera rel.*, the first work since Cassiciacum to carry a dedication ... marks a genuinely new start for Augustine.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ this tied in with his commitment to the mutual charity of all believers. Moreover, his recognition that true spirituality could be achieved by all in a life lived in devotion to God suggests the possibility of a community in which both spiritual devotion and spiritual understanding were pursued concurrently, that is, the possibility of a more open (non-elite) community living the devoted spiritual life leading to God, where all would live this devoted life with acknowledgment of proper efforts at spiritual understanding (and obligation of communication of such) as possible.

¹¹⁴ *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 269-278; specifically emphasizing *ord.*, *sol.*, *quant.*, *mag.*, *mus.*, and *uera rel.*

¹¹⁵ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 277.

¹¹⁶ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 123. The first such 'urgent' writing he identifies is *uera rel.*

¹¹⁷ J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* v. 2 (1992), 278.

In *letter 15*, Augustine wrote to Romanianus that he had just 'written something on the Catholic religion'.¹¹⁸ This is undoubtedly a reference to *On True Religion*. The title itself points to Augustine's claim to a coherent grasp of the Catholic 'religion'. As has been mentioned, for Augustine, *religio* included the whole of Christianity in the world; it was a broad framework which included theology, practice, method, understanding, and other elements. Augustine's concept of religion will be detailed shortly, but it is helpful first to note the sense of summary or synthesis which pervades *On True Religion*.¹¹⁹

In this work, Augustine began with an argument that neo-Platonism, properly understood, was subsumed and fulfilled under the Christian religion.¹²⁰ Augustine also stressed the integration of theory and practice within true religion,¹²¹ which he contrasted with the failings of the ancient philosophers: 'What they engaged in with the people in religious rites was one thing, and what they undertook in the hearing of the same people, or defended privately was something else' (*uera rel.* 1.1).¹²² Now, instead of 'having the name of Plato rattle off our tongues', Augustine argued that in the Christian era 'we can have the truth fill our hearts' (*uera rel.* 3.5).¹²³ In the same chapter, the unity of theory and practice leads to an institutional connection. Augustine recorded that, based on Christian truth (specifically represented in its teaching and holy martyrs), churches in which the ascetic life is practiced have appeared throughout the world.¹²⁴ In considering Augustine's ecclesiology, it is apparent that it was construed as part of a whole Christian world-view: an understanding of the Catholic Christian communion, and participation within it, which facilitated and flowed from the proper (yet often diverse) individual and corporate pursuit of the goals of 'true religion'.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ *scripsi quiddam de catholica religione, quantum dominus dare dignatus est, quod tibi uolo ante aduentum meum mittere, si charta interim non desit.* CSEL 34.2. 35-36. Like this letter, *uera rel.* was also dedicated to Romanianus.

¹¹⁹ E. TeSelle speaks of Augustine's 'power of synthesis' in the working out of his understanding of the Trinity during these years (*Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 116).

¹²⁰ *uera rel.* 1.1-3.4; cf. J.S. Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, LCC 6 (1953), 223. The extent to which neo-Platonism influenced or motivated certain goals of the religious life which Augustine held or elements of his religious synthesis is set out in the preceding and following (cf. *uera rel.* 40.74 and 11.22) discussions and continues the line illustrated in previous chapters.

¹²¹ e.g. *uera rel.* 1.1; 3.5; 4.6 (cf. 7.12); 53.102; thus continuing the integrated understanding of the spiritual and religious life seen in *mus*.

¹²² *Non nunc agitur, quis eorum senserit uerius, sed certe illud satis, quantum mihi uidetur, apparet aliud eos in religione suscepisse cum populo et aliud eodem ipso populo audiente defendisse priuatim.* CCL 32. 187.

¹²³ *si quando autem ad disputationem uenitur, Platonico nomine ora crepantia quam pectus uero plenum magis habere gestimus?* CCL 32. 192.

¹²⁴ see below, esp. p. 211-213 and n. 135 as well as p. 218 and n. 170 for discussion.

¹²⁵ a fact which has methodological implications. Since the ecclesiological/ecclesial elements present in *uera rel.* are within an overarching framework, they have been elucidated as such. Augustine achieved a synthesis in his understanding of the church in *uera rel.*, but he did not present a separate or systematic outline of this ecclesial understanding.

What specifically can be determined about Augustine's understanding of the term '(true) religion'? He defined or described this term in a number of passages. The treatise opens with the definition of 'true religion' as that in which 'one God is worshipped and, with the most refined piety, is acknowledged [as] the beginning of all natural things, [the source] from which the universe was begun, is perfected, and holds together'.¹²⁶ Augustine's use of adjectival qualifiers in *On True Religion* also affords insight into his understanding of Christian *religio*. Religion is '*uera*' (*passim*), '*orthodoxa*' (*uera rel.* 5.9), '*perfecta*' (*uera rel.* 10.19), '*sacrosancta*' (*uera rel.* 50.99), and '*catholica*' (*passim*).¹²⁷ This 'Catholic religion' is the bastion of truth on earth: 'when [that] one truth is understood [minds are cleansed] and the most holy religion is introduced' (*uera rel.* 50.99).¹²⁸ On a number of occasions, Augustine also spoke of religion in terms of worship.¹²⁹

We must consider what ... to believe in order to worship God rightly, in which alone there is salvation. In this the primary discussion is whether we ought rather to believe those who call us to worship many gods or those who call us to worship one God ... (*uera rel.* 25.46).¹³⁰

At about the same time Augustine wrote about Catholic worship in a letter to Maximus:

by Catholic Christians ... no deceased person is worshipped, no divine authority is adored, because these are made and established by God, but [they only worship] the one God, who made and established all things (*ep.* 17.5).¹³¹

This worship element included the general aspects associated with the practice of (a) religion; such as rites, rituals, liturgy, and corporate assembly for instruction and praise. The connection of corporate worship with the personal practice of religion is not quite clear and is largely left implicit in the work, yet both were normative in Augustine's view by this stage. Finally, significant impetus for Augustine's

¹²⁶ *Cum omnis uitae bonae ac beatae uia in uera religione sit constituta, qua unus deus colitur et purgatissima pietate cognoscitur principium naturarum omnium.* CCL 32. 187.

¹²⁷ in collating word counts of some of Augustine's early Christian terminology (see Appendix B, Tables 8-17) it emerges that *uera rel.* marks a second point of real emergence and increased frequency in the period 386-391, the first is *mor. ecc.*

¹²⁸ *Quo uno cognito omnis ab animis proteruitas puerilis excluditur et introducitur sacrosancta religio.* CCL 32. 251.

¹²⁹ '*colere*', most often, e.g. *uera rel.* 1.1; 2.2 (3x in addition to the expression *uerum cultum ueri dei*); 3.4; 25.46 (twice in contrast to the pagan *multorum cultores [deorum]*), eight times in chapter 55.108f. (*Non sit religio humanorum operum cultus. ... Non sit nobis religio cultus bestiarum. Meliores enim sunt extremi homines, quos tamen colere non debemus. Non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum ...* CCL 32. 256f.); also '*uenerare*', e.g. *uera rel.* 2.2; and '*adorare*', e.g. *uera rel.* 55.110; cf. Appendix B, Table 16 and p. 310-312.

¹³⁰ *sed nostrum est considerare, quibus uel hominibus uel libris credendum sit ad colendum recte deum, quae una salus est. Huius rei prima disceptatio est, utrum his potius credamus, qui ad multos deos, an his, qui ad unum deum colendum nos uocant.* CCL 32. 216.

¹³¹ *ad summam tamen ne te hoc lateat et in sacrilega conuicia inprudenter trahat, scias a Christianis catholicis, quorum in uestro oppido etiam ecclesia constituta est, nullum coli mortuorum, nihil denique ut numen adorari, quod sit factum et conditum a deo, sed unum ipsum deum, qui fecit et condidit omnia.* CSEL 34.2.1. 44.

ecclesiological understanding came through his continued discussions and pursuit of the religious life. Indeed, most of his practical ecclesiological developments can be (and are probably best) understood as resulting from conclusions on the best way in which to lead and fulfill the spiritual life on earth.

The pursuit of constructs which would facilitate the attainment of the goals and ideals of the religious life led Augustine to describe religion and the church in increasingly institutional terms. He identified the locus of true religion within the 'Catholic church' specifically in the activities of local churches spread throughout the world.¹³² His descriptions of this religion 'all over the world' give prominent place to teaching, to the commendation of an individual pursuit of the religious life which is ascetic in its visible manifestation, and to the various identifiable groups which facilitated such practices. While he regarded the hermitic life as an admirable one, Augustine did not view it as the only or even preferable ascetic option.¹³³ His own affinity for companionship and his view of love (*caritas*) as the umbrella for all proper outworking of the religious life led him to pursue the ideal of the ascetic life in community. These institutional elements which flow from the pursuit of the religious spiritual life had a significant bearing on Augustine's ecclesiological development in the later Thagaste years. As Augustine moved through the year 390, these elements were among a number of factors which came together to stimulate his desire for a more active role in the practical Christian community and to bring his course of activities and thought closer to the institutional church.

THE CHURCH: UNIVERSAL TEACHER, HOSPITAL, AND ASCETIC COMMUNITY

During his final year at Thagaste, Augustine's thoughts about the church crystallized. In his writings, the church is the vehicle of believers for right living (*i.e.* that which teaches, trains for, and models true religion), it cultivates spiritual people, and carnal persons (while being protected) in its confines were converted into spiritual ones. In *On True Religion* chapter 3.4, Augustine summarized the instruction of the church with a series of New Testament passages (*i.e.* Jn. 1.1; Mt. 6.19; Gal. 6.8; Lk. 14.11; Mt. 5.39; Mt. 5.44; Lk. 17.21; 2 Cor. 4.18; and 1 Jn. 2.15). These passages focus on the

¹³² *uera rel.* 5.9-6.10 and 3.5, respectively.

¹³³ as noted in previous chapters. Certainly, most people were not suited to such a life (*cf. mor. ecc.* 31.66). *Mor. ecc.* 31.66-34.72 gives a description of various groups which admirably pursue the ascetic life. This section demonstrates that Augustine felt that the ascetic life is a necessary element in any pursuit of the religious life (or true religion) regardless of situation. Augustine's admiration of different types of ascetics shows that he was not concerned whether one adopt this or that style (despite his preference to live in community) simply that the proper religious life was ascetic.

gospel, the exhortation to pursue spiritual instead of worldly things, and the love of God and others over self and the world. In chapter 3.5, he continued,

these things are now read to the peoples through the whole world and are heard gladly with veneration. After so much blood, so many fires, and so many crosses of the martyrs, churches are springing up that much more productively and richly, even as far as the barbarian nations. That so many thousands of young men and virgins are contemning marriage and living in chastity amazes no one ... Through all the parts of the world where people dwell the Christian rites are handed over¹³⁴ to those who profess and promise such. These things are read daily in the churches and are explained/expounded by the priests; ... Countless people from all the nations undertake this way [of life], so that deserting the riches and honors of this world in order to dedicate their whole life to the one most high God. Islands and many lands formerly deserted are filled with solitaires. Finally, throughout cities and towns, fortresses, villages, farms, and private villas there is openly promoted and sought after such aversion from the world (or the things of the world) and conversion into the one true God, that daily through the whole world the human race responds with almost one voice: 'Lift up your hearts and hold them before the Lord'.¹³⁵

The integration of the church in Augustine's concept of Christian religion is clear. Probably the most significant ecclesial idea in this passage is the general rubric under which Augustine's ecclesial comments occur. The rubric is two-fold:

1. churches have appeared everywhere (cleansing souls with Catholic truth, bringing spiritual belief, if not always understanding, to all; and acting as a teacher/trainer to facilitate the pursuit of the religious spiritual life); and
2. because the church was everywhere, people were everywhere adopting an ascetic lifestyle.

The church is presented in this context as the means by which the end of true religion is grasped, cultivated, and achieved. Although Augustine saw all Catholic Christian groups as subsumed under the Catholic church and the description he gave was of the general expansion of the Catholic church, for the first time the concept of the local church is present as well. Previously, he had grasped the church as universal both as the one home of salvific instruction/knowledge and in extension of all those living

¹³⁴ a reference to baptism and the baptismal process/rites, etc.

¹³⁵ *Si haec per totum orbem iam populis leguntur et cum ueneratione libentissime audiuntur; si post tantum sanguinem, tantos ignes, tot cruces martyrum tanto fertilius et uberius usque ad barbaras nationes ecclesiae pullularunt; si tot iuuenum et uirginum milia contemnentium nuptias casteque uiuentium iam nemo miratur ... si tali pollicitationi atque sponsioni per omnes terrarum partes, quas homines incolunt, sacra Christiana traduntur; si haec cottidie leguntur in ecclesiis et a sacerdotibus exponuntur; si tundunt pectora, qui haec implere conantur; si tam innumerabiles aggreuntur hanc uiam, ut desertis diuitiis et honoribus huius mundi ex omni hominum genere uni deo summo totam uitam dicare uolentium desertae quondam insulae ac multarum terrarum solitudo compleatur; si denique per urbes atque oppida, castella, uicos, agros etiam uillasque priuatas in tantum aperte suadetur et appetitur a terrenis auersio et in unum deum uerumque conuersio, ut cottidie per uniuersum orbem humanum genus una paene uoce respondeat: 'Sursum cor habere se ad dominum'. CCL 32. 191-192. De Vogüé has recently given a brief discussion of this passage in light of the emphasis on the ascetic life as 'un triomphe de la prédication évangélique et une preuve de la vertu divine qui meut l'Église' in *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité* v. 2 (1993), 239f. (cf. 242).*

rightly.¹³⁶ Moreover, he had conceived at Thagaste of the church as those united as the body of Christ in pursuit of God and spiritual understanding.¹³⁷ Here, however, for the first time, Augustine discussed the practical processes (institution) which saved, united, and enabled all believers *and* identified these processes in the specific manifestations of the church – individual ‘churches’ spread everywhere.

Universal Asceticism

The principal result of Catholic religion (and the results of the universal church which communicated that religion) was the creation of people united in their devotion and dedication to the one God. To Augustine's mind, the primary example of this dedication and devotion was the proliferation of ascetic practice. Thus, it must be considered how asceticism fitted into Augustine's ecclesiology at Thagaste. The argument that the Thagaste community was a monastery has received recent impetus in the work of George Lawless, broadly following in the line of Zumkeller.¹³⁸ As seen in chapter four, the view of Thagaste as a monastery is too premature and narrow. Still, Augustine did found a monastery in Hippo shortly after his arrival there in 391. These observations underline the probable ecclesiological and institutional significance of thought on the ascetic and ‘monastic’ life during the latter period at Thagaste. The most noticeable aspect of Augustine's view of the ascetic life is its breadth. The key issue for him was the renunciation of the pursuit of worldly things for devotion ‘to the most high God’,¹³⁹ the replacement of the love of material things with the love of spiritual things and, above all, of God.¹⁴⁰ To his mind the natural tangible result of people coming to the church for God's salvation, of being initiated into the Christian rites, of hearing the teaching of the church, was the adoption of ascetic practices.¹⁴¹ Every Christian should strive to fulfill the precepts of Christianity, forsake ‘the riches and honors of the present world’, and dedicate their whole lives to God.¹⁴² An ascetic life

¹³⁶ cf. e.g. ch. 3, p. 77-78 and ch. 4, p. 145f.

¹³⁷ cf. ch. 4, p. 160-162 (esp. n. 175) and esp. 167-169.

¹³⁸ G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45-58 (discussed in some detail above, ch. 4, p. 181-185, cf. 172-180); cf. A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's ... Religious Life* (1986), 24-32, 57-58.

¹³⁹ *uera rel.* 3.5; *mus.* 6.14.48; 6.16.53; cf. *mor. ecc.* 35.77 (cf. also ch. 4, p. 146f.).

¹⁴⁰ Augustine was unconcerned with the particular style or context of ascetic practice, cf. n. 133.

¹⁴¹ *uera rel.* 3.5. The focus on asceticism is not surprising since it can be traced back to Augustine's own conversion in which ascetic ideals and examples played an integral part. His decision to surrender his attachment to the world, complementing his previously attained intellectual submission to the Christian gospel, was the highlight of the garden scene in Milan. It is interesting that he ties asceticism so closely to conversions here as well. *Mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* present as a normative ideal the general incorporation of ascetic principles into any Christian context, see esp. *mor. ecc.* 34.65f. The universal nature of asceticism, however, is present with new force in *uera rel.*

¹⁴² *uera rel.* 3.5.

in these terms is the proper result of belief in the pre-eminence of the spiritual God. Later in the work, Augustine summarized this conception:

Thus we are persuaded that we ought to turn our love from the pleasures of the body to the eternal essence of truth ... For our punishment has been moderated by divine providence so that even in this corrupted body it is allowed to reach towards justice, having given up all pride to submit to the one God, not to trust in itself but to commit itself to that one [God] for ruling and protecting (*uera rel.* 15.29).¹⁴³

Augustine believed that the opportunity for 'submission to God' and dependence upon him for direction and protection was something which God had made possible in a number of ways.¹⁴⁴ It was made possible first and foremost by Christ's incarnation and exemplary life and death (*cf. uera rel.* 16.30-32), creating an object for complete faith. This work itself had been prepared for by the Old Testament scriptures, sacraments, and laws.¹⁴⁵ Now, following the work of Christ and the expansion of the church, divine guidance and protection and salutary sacraments were to be found in the Catholic church and its two Testaments of scripture.¹⁴⁶

As in previous discussions at Thagaste,¹⁴⁷ *On True Religion* presents Christ as a moral model, the perfect example of one living the truly religious life: '[Christ's] whole life on earth ... was an instruction in morals ... his resurrection from the dead ... made known how easily the body may serve the soul when the it [the soul] is subject to God' (*uera rel.* 16.32).¹⁴⁸ Augustine stated that the example of Christ was clear teaching available to all. It outlined the right course of life to all believers and was in complete harmony with the church's teaching and the Christian sacraments.¹⁴⁹

All things which by desiring to have we used to live incorrectly he reduced to worthless by abstaining from [them]; all things which in desiring to avoid we turned aside from the devotion to (study of) truth, he did not avoid from suffering. For one is not able to commit any sin unless

¹⁴³ *Ita enim nobis suadetur a corporis uoluptatibus ad aeternam essentiam ueritatis amorem nostrum oportere conuerti ... Nam ita etiam nostra supplicia diuina prouidentia moderata est, ut et in hoc corpore tam corruptibili ad iustitiam tendere liceret et deposita omni superbia uni deo uero collum subdere, nihil de se ipso fidere, illi uni se regendum tuendumque committere.* CCL 32. 205. The presentation of the ascetic spiritual life in terms of the right love of God over against the loves of pride had crystallized in *mus.* (see above, p. 194f.).

¹⁴⁴ *uera rel.* 16.30.

¹⁴⁵ *uera rel.* 17.33-34.

¹⁴⁶ *uera rel.* 17.33; *cf. retr.* 13.3.

¹⁴⁷ *cf. ch.* 4, p. 157-159.

¹⁴⁸ *Tota itaque uita eius in terris per hominem, quem suscipere dignatus est, disciplina morum fuit. Resurrectio uero eius a mortuis nihil hominis perire naturae, cum omnia salua sunt deo, satis indicauit, et quemadmodum cuncta seruiant creatori suo siue ad uindictam peccatorum siue ad hominis liberationem quamque facile corpus animae seruiat, cum ipsa subicitur deo.* CCL 32. 207.

¹⁴⁹ *uera rel.* 17.33. In this passage, Augustine did state, however, that Christ also teaches or brings saving knowledge in the more subtle and reserved words of scripture, the sacraments, and the explanations of the mysteries.

when those things are sought which he scorned or those avoided which he endured (*uera rel.* 16.31).¹⁵⁰

From his consideration of Christ's example, the ascetic life was not for Augustine confined to one particular, rigid lifestyle but was a life which reflected the conviction that one's principal goal in life pertained to the things of the spiritual realm, such as truth, understanding, happiness, and God. Later in the treatise, Augustine explained the account of Christ's temptation in the desert by the devil (Mt. 4.1-11):

Yet the threefold temptation of the man whom the truth himself had assumed, pointed out a warning [for us] ... For he taught that the love of pleasures ought to be tamed, so that [we] should not yield even to hunger. ... Thus pride is trampled down. Also the extreme enticement of curiosity was subjected ... Therefore, whoever feeds internally on the word of God does not seek pleasure in the desert, the person who is subject to the one God does not seek exaltation in the mountains, that is earthly exaltation. Whoever adheres to the eternal spectacle of unchangeable truth is not cast down by the height of the body, that is the eyes, that he should come to know temporal or inferior things (*uera rel.* 38.71).¹⁵¹

The elements of the morally disciplined life that Christ exemplified are: controlling, and even abstaining from, worldly pleasures; subduing pride; controlling the distraction of curiosity; feeding inwardly on the word of God; aversion from human exaltation; and focused contemplation on the immutable spiritual truth of God. Augustine claimed that these practices had been made commonplace by the activity and diffusion of the church.¹⁵² The breadth of Augustine's view of asceticism in the church is also shown in his commendation of all the goals and pursuits of the ascetic life for women (despite his patriarchal phrasing):

This principle is able to be enjoined on women too, not by marital, but by fraternal right – by which right we are neither male nor female in Christ. For they have a certain virility to them, when they subjugate the female pleasures, and serve Christ and order [their] desires. Which [virility] is manifest in the many widows and virgins of God, even in the many married but who are ... preserving their conjugal rights in fraternity by the dispensation of the Christian people (*uera rel.* 41.78).¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ *Omnia, quae habere cupientes non recte uiuebamus, carendo uilefecit. Omnia, quae uitare cupientes ab studio ueritatis deuiabamus, perpetiendo deiecit. Non enim ullum peccatum committi potest, nisi dum appetuntur ea quae ille contempsit, aut fugiuntur quae ille sustinuit. CCL 32. 206-207; cf. mus. 6.4.7.*

¹⁵¹ *Triplex etiam temptatio in homine, quem ueritas ipsa suscepit, cauenda monstrata est ... Ita enim domitam docuit esse oportere cupiditatem uoluptatis, ut nec fami cedendum sit ... Ita calcata superbia est. Subiecta est autem extrema etiam curiositatis illecebra, ... Quamobrem quisquis intus dei uerbo pascitur, non quaerit in ista eremo uoluptatem, qui uni deo tantum subiectus est, non quaerit in monte, id est in terrena elatione iactantiam. Quisquis aeterno spectaculo incommutabilis ueritatis adhaerescit, non per fastigium huius corporis, id est per hos oculos praecipitatur, ut temporalia et inferiora cognoscat. CCL 32. 233-234.*

¹⁵² *uera rel.* 3.5.

¹⁵³ *Hoc et feminis praecipi potest non maritali, sed fraterno iure, quo iure in Christo nec masculus nec femina sumus. Habent enim et illae uirile quiddam, unde femineas subiugent uoluptates, unde Christo seruiant et imperent cupiditati. Quod in multis uiduis et uirginibus dei, in multis etiam maritatis, sed iam fraterne coniugalia iura seruantibus Christiani populi dispensatione manifestum est. CCL 32. 239.*

Therefore, just as all Christians were saved and equal in Christ, so all were able to follow his exemplary life in the pursuit of true communion with God.

Spiritual Healing and Training in the Church

For Augustine, however, the call of believers to true religion was more than a call to asceticism.¹⁵⁴ In his comments on Augustine's understanding of true religion, TeSelle notes that Augustine 'knew that the test which proves Christianity the only true and perfect religion is that it successfully reconciles the soul to God'.¹⁵⁵ Asceticism was the call of all faithful Christians to the things of the soul, to spiritual contemplation, understanding, and worship.¹⁵⁶ Ascetic practice was a vehicle towards these ideals. Since his exposure to Christian ascetic groups at Milan and especially at Rome, Augustine had considered such groups (and individuals) a part of the church which in conjunction with the institutional church comprised the universal church. To him, Catholic ascetics were valid examples for the whole Catholic communion.¹⁵⁷ They were often presented in Augustine's early writings as the norm and not the exception.¹⁵⁸ The link between the expansion of the church and the expansion of ascetic lifestyle in *On True Religion* (e.g. 3.4-5) demonstrates that this idea continued in 390 and early 391. In addition, Augustine's presentation of this link illustrates that in this period he saw the teaching, preaching, sacramental church as integral to the fulfillment of God's call to spiritual living.

The concept of the church as a teaching and training institution was not new among Augustine's early ecclesiological ideas,¹⁵⁹ but it was presented in a much more refined form in *On True Religion*. In this treatise, the goals and procedures of instruction were spelled out more clearly. Augustine's former idea of the small group of wise men affiliated to the church but distinct in the world from the masses of (intellectual) 'children' in the church proper and in its various religious communities had been transformed to an understanding of intellectual spirituals and devoted spirituals,¹⁶⁰ as well as carnal members of a universal church, in which those of spiritual understanding

¹⁵⁴ in *mus.* 1.6.12, he stated, 'the [reason] for which we do something is much more significant than the actual thing we do' (*Nam credo uideri tibi multo esse praestantius, id propter quod aliquid facimus, quam idipsum quod facimus.* PL 32. 1090).

¹⁵⁵ citing *quant.* 34.78 and 36.80. E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 123.

¹⁵⁶ *uera rel.* 55.110.

¹⁵⁷ see ch. 3, p. 115-117, cf. ch. 4, p. 145f.

¹⁵⁸ as seen above, *mus.* bk. 6 reflects Augustine's achievement of an understanding of the way in which ascetic practice enabled spiritual progress.

¹⁵⁹ see discussion in esp. ch. 3, p. 73f.; and ch. 4, p. 137f.

¹⁶⁰ i.e. both those spiritual by the perception of the incorporeal reality of God by reason based on faith and devotion and those spiritual purely by means of a life of complete devotion to God in practice.

ought to protect the carnal and help them become spiritual.¹⁶¹ In *On True Religion* chapter 3.3, Augustine explained that Platonism, by merit of its insight that 'truth is seen not by bodily eyes but with the pure mind, and that any soul which clings to [truth] is blessed and perfect',¹⁶² was the culmination of pagan philosophy's search for truth. Indeed, Augustine presented Plato as one who anticipated Christianity and would have submitted to it if he had lived after Christ.¹⁶³ Christianity, Augustine continued, was the fulfillment for all people of the truth which Platonism adequately described in its time.¹⁶⁴ Christian religion (*i.e.* true religion) was bestowed by God through Christ

to persuade the peoples at least to believe [what is true] even if they were not able to understand, or those who were able to understand, that they should not be implicated in the deviant opinions of the multitude and should shield themselves from their vulgar errors (*uera rel.* 3.3).¹⁶⁵

Thus, truth was presented to all. Ideally, one should come not only to spiritual belief but also to spiritual (for Augustine, incorporeal) understanding and/or experience. Those unable to attain such 'spirituality' were neither lost nor outside the church but were in danger of 'deviant opinions and errors'. His description of the process by which people grasp spiritual truth (and principally God), the truth which Platonism had identified and which Christianity had made generally available,¹⁶⁶ is significant. It creates a link between the ideal life of the contemplation of God and a conscious manner of life which facilitates this goal. Augustine wrote:

Nothing is a greater barrier to the grasping of truth than a life given to desires and false images of sensible things which, impressed on us by this sensible world through the body, generate various opinions and errors. Therefore the soul is to be healed for the considering of the unchangeable form of things ... in which soul such rationality and understanding is given that his [God's] eternity may be enjoyed fully in contemplation, and so one is brought to such a place/state that it is possible to attain eternal life (*uera rel.* 3.3).¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹ a transition which was seen to have begun in *Gn. a. Man.*, cf. ch. 4, p. 142-144; but emerged clearly only at the end of *mus.* (6.17.59), see discussion above, p. 203f.

¹⁶² *Si enim Plato ipse uiueret et me interrogantem non aspernaretur ... cum sibi ab illo persuaderetur non corporeis oculis, sed pura mente ueritatem uideri, cui quaecumque anima inhaesisset, eam beatam fieri atque perfectam.* CCL 32. 188.

¹⁶³ *uera rel.* 4.6, cf. *uera rel.* 3.3-4 and 4.7.

¹⁶⁴ cf. E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 124; G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534.

¹⁶⁵ *si quisquam existeret uir magnus atque diuinus, qui talia populis persuaderet credenda saltem, si percipere non ualerent, aut, si qui possent percipere, non prauis opinionibus multitudinis implicati uulgaribus obruerentur erroribus.* CCL 32. 189.

¹⁶⁶ cf. R.J. Teske, 'Homo spiritualis in St. Augustine's *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*', *SP* 22 (1987), 351. He describes the 'two necessary conditions for one's being a spiritual in Augustine's sense': 'First, one has to be within the church, and second one must have what was for Augustine the central insight of Neoplatonism, namely, an intellectual grasp of incorporeal or spiritual reality'.

¹⁶⁷ *ad quam percipiendam nihil magis impedire quam uitam libidinibus deditam et falsas imagines rerum sensibilibus, quae nobis ab hoc sensibili mundo per corpus impressae uarias opiniones erroresque generarent; quamobrem sanandum esse animum ad intuendam incommutabilem rerum formam et eodem modo semper se habentem atque undique sui similem pulchritudinem nec distentam locis nec tempore*

The possibility of being redeemed to a state in which God might be enjoyed spiritually had come 'in Christian times' (*Christianis temporibus*) and its success was manifest by full churches (in contrast to empty pagan temples) where people 'were called away from the desire of temporal and transient "goods" to the hope of eternal life and spiritual and intelligible "goods"' (*uera rel.* 4.6).¹⁶⁸ Thus, Augustine had come to see the church as that institution especially placed in the world to proclaim true beliefs, through which the souls of all, both the wise and the simple, could be healed. Furthermore, the church was to expound the precepts of Christianity, by which those who are healed may be protected, encouraged, and if possible, trained toward contemplation of God's eternity.

The description of the soul (or the carnal person) being healed is found a number of times in *On True Religion*.¹⁶⁹ Immediately following the passage from chapter 3.3 cited above, Augustine used the same medical image for the process of bringing people into contact with truth in the new Christian religion. He spoke of the truth of the Christian scriptures which had been handed down and then continued:

today throughout the nations and peoples it [the spiritual gospel, here Jn. 1.1-3] is preached, ... for comprehending, loving, and for fully enjoying [the 'word'] so that the soul may be healed for the taking or receiving of such light with the sight of the mind. It is said to the greedy 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where worms and mold ruin and where thieves rage and ransack, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart is also' [Mt. 6.19]; ... Finally, it was said to all 'Do not love the world, because the things which are in the world are the lust of the body, the lust of the eyes, and worldly ambition' [1 Jn. 2.15-16] (*uera rel.* 3.4).¹⁷⁰

Once again, the combination of the universal preaching of healing truth and reading of the scriptures as central elements in the universal Catholic program emerges.¹⁷¹

uariatam, sed unum atque idem omni ex parte seruantem, ... in quibus animae tantum rationali et intellectuali datum, ut eius aeternitatis contemplatione perfruatur atque afficiatur ex ea aeternamque uitam possit mereri. CCL 32. 188-189.

¹⁶⁸ *a cupiditate bonorum temporalium atque affluentium ad spem uitae aeternae et bona spiritalia et intellegibilia uocari et currere humanum genus.* CCL 32. 192.

¹⁶⁹ e.g. *uera rel.* 3.3; 3.4; 12.25; 16.30; 23.44; 24.45; 50.98 (cf. also discussions of implicit healing, opening, and training of the mind's eyes to behold the light of wisdom, such as in *uera rel.* 19.37 and 20.39).

¹⁷⁰ *si hodie per gentes populosque praedicatur: [Jn 1.1-3]; si ad hoc percipiendum, diligendum, perfruendum, ut anima sanetur et tantae luci hauriendae mentis acies conualescat, dicitur auaris: 'Nolite uobis condere thesauros in terra, ubi tinea et robigo exterminat et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur, sed thesaurizate uobis thesauros in caelo. ... Ubi enim est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum; ... postremo dicitur omnibus: 'Nolite diligere mundum, quoniam ea, quae in mundo sunt, concupiscentia carnis est et concupiscentia oculorum et ambitio saeculi'. CCL 32. 190-191. See above, p. 197-198 (esp. n. 69 and 72) for discussion of the same two biblical passages in *mus*.*

¹⁷¹ also in this passage Augustine answered a series of sins, representative of the general sick condition of humanity, with a series of New Testament passages (all but one from the gospels). To the greedy (*auaris*), he cited Mt. 6.19; to the wanton (*luxuriosis*), Gal. 6.8; to the proud (*superbis*), Lk. 14.11; to the wrathful (*iracundis*), Mt. 5.39; to the quarrelsome (*discordiosis*), Mt. 5.44; to the superstitious (*superstitiosis*), Lk. 17.21; and to the curious (*curiosis*), 2 Cor. 4.18. It is interesting to

For Augustine, the idea of the church as a place of spiritual healing¹⁷² was not confined to the preaching of the gospel but also included the nurturing of believers toward the pursuit of the spiritual life and the protection of the weak from the errors of the material world and false teachers. *On True Religion* chapter 11.25 states how the healing of the soul, taking place by belief, sets up a framework for a successful spiritual life. When the Christian is cleansed from sin, the body is granted stability on account of the stability of the soul in God. Thus, the soul

enjoys God more and therefore will flourish more than the body. For the body will flourish through [the soul] and the [soul] through unchangeable truth, which is the only Son of God, thus the body will flourish through the Son of God, because all things exist through him [cf. Jn. 1.3; Col. 1.16-17]. By his gift, which he gives to the soul, *i.e.* the Holy Spirit, not only the soul to whom it is given becomes safe and peaceful and holy, but even the body will be vivified and will be most cleansed in its nature.¹⁷³

The role of the church in mediating this healing is not spelled out in great detail. Basically, the church is responsible for proclamation of true belief and possession of salutary sacraments (cf. 3.5; 5.8-9; 17.33). However, chapter 16.30 may contain an allusion to formal instruction:

But in all manner of ways God heals souls apt for the timely opportunities which are ordained by his marvelous wisdom. Concerning these things it is either not to be discussed or it is to be discussed [only] among the pious and perfect. In no manner did he express his care for the human race more beneficently than when that same wisdom of God, *i.e.* the only Son, consubstantial with the Father and co-eternal, deigned to take on full humanity, and the 'word was made flesh and lived among us' [Jn. 1.14]. For thus he demonstrated to carnal ones, unable to consider truth with their minds and given over to corporeal senses, how high a place human nature has among the creatures.¹⁷⁴

Significantly, the idea of secrecy appears in connection with discussion of the special saving work of God. The manner in which 'God heals souls' was a process which entailed the work (especially incarnation) of Christ, the 'Son of God'. The details of how this work is communicated (or the details of the work itself) were not to be

speculate whether such series of passages were entirely Augustine's construction or if they corresponded to actual regular teaching or preaching in the churches with which he was familiar.

¹⁷² Augustine did not explicitly refer to the church as a hospital, but the healing imagery is found in conjunction with ecclesial references frequently enough to suggest that Augustine did have a medical image of the church and its work.

¹⁷³ *Quae rursus non per se stabilitur, sed per deum, quo fruitur ideoque amplius quam corpus uigebit. Corpus enim per ipsam uigebit et ipsa per incommutabilem ueritatem, qui filius dei unicus est, atque ita et corpus per ipsum filium dei uigebit, quia omnia per ipsum. Dono etiam eius, quod animae datur, id est sancto spiritu, non solum anima cui datur salua et paccata et sancta fit, sed ipsum etiam corpus uiuificabitur eritque in natura sua mundissimum.* CCL 32. 202-203.

¹⁷⁴ *Sed cum omnibus modis medeatur animis deus pro temporum opportunitatibus, quae mira sapientia eius ordinantur, de quibus aut non est tractandum aut inter pios perfectosque tractandum est, nullo modo beneficentius consuluit generi humano quam cum ipsa dei sapientia, id est unicus filius consubstantialis patri et coaeternus totum hominem suscipere dignatus est, 'et uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in nobis'. Ita enim demonstraui carnalibus et non ualentibus intueri mente ueritatem corporeisque sensibus deditis, quam excelsum locum inter creaturas habeat humana natura.* CCL 32. 205.

discussed openly but only among the pious and perfect. It is not clear if Augustine was alluding to catechetical, or even formal, instruction here.¹⁷⁵ Overall, however, the preceding passages, combined with others (e.g. *uera rel.* 3.5, 17.33, and 28.51), present a more explicit link than previously between Augustine's understanding of the Catholic church as encompassing all those people whose souls have been healed and who are living out the religious life in various ascetic fashions and the church as an authoritative bastion of divine doctrine and healing. The idea of the church as a place of healing cannot be separated from the concept of the church as teacher. The extent to which the church heals is dependent on its proclamation and explication of the gospel and the precepts of Christianity. Similarly, the extent to which it protects is largely a reflection of how capably the general truth of the Catholic religion is taught, defended, and explained.

In chapter 23.44, Augustine linked the concepts of healing, teaching, and ascetic lifestyle:

When the soul has been regenerated through the grace of God and restored to wholeness, and made subject to the one [God] by whom it was recreated, with its body restored to original strength, it will begin to possess the world and not be possessed by it.¹⁷⁶

To 'possess the world and not be possessed by it' is an accurate summary statement of his early practice of asceticism.¹⁷⁷ Augustine did not desire to dispense with secular learning or philosophic accomplishments altogether nor did he see material possessions (or indeed substances) as evil in themselves. The motive behind the usage of worldly things was the important thing.

Augustine described the divine nurturing medicine of God, mediated through the church, in chapter 24.45:

Therefore the same medicine of the soul, which the divine providence and ineffable loving-kindness brings forth distinctly step by step is very beautiful. For it [his medicine] is divided into authority and reason. Authority requires faith and prepares the person for reason. Reason leads to understanding and [experiential] knowledge, although reason does not entirely neglect authority, since it must be considered whom is to be believed, and certainly the highest authority is of those things of truth already known and understood. But because we come and go among temporal things (and to love them we hinder ourselves from eternity) a sort of temporal medicine [authority] which calls to health not those who know but those who believe is prior not in excellence of nature but in temporal order ... Therefore, to these carnal or corporeal forms it is

¹⁷⁵ in *uera rel.*, Augustine at least identified an ongoing semi-formal process of expounding and explaining the scriptures as a regular activity in the churches which had appeared throughout the world. His literary activity against the Manichees, and esp. in *uera rel.*, should be understood in these terms.

¹⁷⁶ *Porro cum anima per dei gratiam regenerata et in integrum restituta et illi subdita uni, a quo recreata est, instaurato etiam corpore in pristinam firmitatem non cum mundo possideri, sed mundum possidere coeperit.* CCL 32. 214.

¹⁷⁷ cf. *mor. ecc.* 35.77.

necessary for children to adhere lovingly, but for adolescents almost necessary, from there with advancing age it is not necessary.¹⁷⁸

This provides one of the clearest statements of Augustine's idea that authority is necessary for all initially but as one grows (if they are so able) in the understanding of authority by reason the need for authority receded.¹⁷⁹ The usage of 'ages' conveniently allowed Augustine to speak of one person's progress through spiritual growth, if that was appropriate, or to indicate the position and needs of a certain type of person (a spiritual child, adolescent, etc.) in the church.¹⁸⁰ Authority, from scripture¹⁸¹ and the church, is connected with the idea of the soul being healed or eyes opened. From this point, reason can lead to understanding. For Augustine, certain individuals are capable of achieving greater understanding than others. As in previous works (cf. the prologue to *Gn. a. Man.*), among the 'new' men and women of the believing community were some who could not transcend their corporeal understanding of truth and God.¹⁸² God was described in anthropomorphic terms in scripture for their sakes.¹⁸³ Yet, it was Augustine's ideal that as one matured and pursued the diligent study of the scriptures and Christian doctrine, the crutch of 'carnal and corporeal forms' would be left behind. 'Those who do not run about childishly, but piously and diligently handle (study) [scripture] as a good and great secret of divine and human things [relations]' (*uera rel.* 28.51)¹⁸⁴ will understand the temporal dispensations of God.¹⁸⁵ He continued to discuss this understanding:

¹⁷⁸ *Quamobrem ipsa quoque animae medicina, quae diuina prouidentia et ineffabili beneficentia geritur gradatim distincteque pulcherrima est. Tribuitur enim in auctoritatem atque rationem. Auctoritas fidem flagitat et rationi praeparat hominem. Ratio ad intellectum cognitionemque perducit, quamquam neque auctoritatem ratio penitus deserit, cum consideratur cui credendum sit, et certe summa est ipsius iam cognitae atque perspicuae ueritatis auctoritas. Sed quia in temporalia deuenimus et eorum amore ab aeternis impedimur, quaedam temporalis medicina, quae non scientes, sed credentes ad salutem uocat, non naturae excellentia, sed ipsius temporis ordine prior est. ... His ergo carnalibus uel corporalibus formis inhaerere amore pueros necesse est, adolescentes uero prope necesse est, hinc iam procedente aetate non est necesse. CCL 32. 215-216.*

¹⁷⁹ this does not mean that the usefulness of authority was diminished. Simply, once one gained spiritual insight, the primary purpose of authority had been fulfilled.

¹⁸⁰ *uera rel.* 17.34 clarified that the type of medicine changed on account of the particular spiritual sickness of an individual. The use of 'ages' also recalls the description of the seven ages of history and the seven stages of personal spiritual development discussed in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23. A discussion fully imbued with ecclesial ideas (see ch. 4, p. 164-169).

¹⁸¹ the importance of scripture as a source of authority and truth is stressed throughout *uera rel.*: the scriptures 'must be believed' (25.47); they are the chief aid of God for human overcoming of the false opinions of the world (9.16); diligent study of scripture is the means toward a renewed (spiritual) mind (cf. 28.50; 51.100); and they are a principal medium through which God illuminates human minds by the divine word, i.e. Christ (42.79).

¹⁸² cf. esp. ch. 4, p. 141-145.

¹⁸³ cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.5; 1.17.27-28.

¹⁸⁴ *inueniuntur ab eis, qui non pueriliter insiliunt, sed pie diligenterque pertractant diuinarum et humanarum rerum tam bonum et tam grande secretum. CCL 32. 220.*

¹⁸⁵ cf. also *uera rel.* 27.50-28.51 and also 26.48.

Which in the time of the new people I see is provided most carefully by the great and spiritual men of the Catholic church to the nurslings [young ones], nor is that delivered popularly which they know the people are not yet ready to handle. They pour out abundant nourishment in the form of 'milk' to the many needy and infirm, but those more able with a little wisdom they feed with food. For they speak wisdom among the perfect, but from the carnal and animal,¹⁸⁶ since they are still little ones (although already 'new men'), they conceal some things, but they never lie (*uera rel.* 28.51).¹⁸⁷

Both the carnal children and the spiritual adults are part of the Christian 'new people', but obviously Augustine's ideal was that of the great, learned, spiritual ones of the church. The concept of the church as a nursery or hospital protecting, gently caring for, and feeding with diluted food its 'nurslings' was a refinement of the concept of church as teacher specifically in terms of hope. Even those unable to understand could believe and, from the strength of soul which follows belief, live a most impressive ascetic life.¹⁸⁸ To the categories of carnal believer and spiritual believer (of understanding) the category of the devoted spiritual has been added.¹⁸⁹ This broadening continues the initial change of mind identified at the end of *On Music*.¹⁹⁰ People devoted to God had been referred to before (*e.g.* implied in the various ascetic groups which Augustine described in *mor. ecc.*) but always with the sense that they were being trained unto spiritual understanding.¹⁹¹ Now those completely devoted to God are acknowledged as spiritual in their own right and exemplified a viable alternative for those incapable of understanding spiritual things by reason.¹⁹² In summary, hope exists not only for the naturally wise and spiritual but for all humanity.

When Augustine outlined true religious living in terms of the bodily senses in his discussion of the parable of the talents in *On True Religion* (54.106), he provided an excellent example of this new 'hope' for all:

¹⁸⁶ cf. ch. 4, p. 142-145 (esp. n. 74, 79, and 88) for comments on the concept of Christian *animales* or 'little ones'.

¹⁸⁷ *Quod etiam temporibus noui populi a magnis et spiritalibus uiris ecclesiae catholicae alumnis uideo cautissime prouideri, ne quid populariter agant, quod nondum esse temporis, ut cum populo agatur, intellegunt. Alimenta lactea large audis pluribus atque instanter infundunt, ualidioribus autem cibus cum sapientibus paucis uescuntur. Sapientiam enim loquuntur inter perfectos, carnalibus uero et animalibus et quamuis nouis hominibus adhuc tamen paruulis nonnulla obtegunt, sed nulla mentiuntur.* CCL 32. 220.

¹⁸⁸ *uera rel.* 3.5.

¹⁸⁹ clearly, the two means of being spiritual were not exclusive, though Augustine did see that intellectual spirituals were slowed in their life of devotion by obligation for the carnal and those outside the church (see note following).

¹⁹⁰ see above, p. 206, esp. n. 110 and p. 216-217 and n. 161.

¹⁹¹ *e.g. mor. ecc.* 33.70 *ad fin.*

¹⁹² see p. 206 and n. 110 for the concluding passage from *mus.* It is significant that Augustine included among the ones who ascend to God by charity those who choose not to focus on reason as well as those who cannot.

But the one who uses well either the five bodily senses for believing and proclaiming the works of God and for nurturing the love of [God], or action and knowledge to compose his nature and for knowing God, that one enters into the joy of his Lord (*uera rel.* 54.106).¹⁹³

This is a statement of hope specifically for those who are carnal or non-intellectual.¹⁹⁴ Augustine explained,

Therefore the [one] talent which was used badly is taken away. It is given to the one who used the five talents [the senses] well, not because it is possible to transfer keenness of understanding, rather it is shown that those who neglect their natural gifting and are ungodly can lose this [gift]. Also [it is shown that] *those who are devoted and pious, although they are of slower mind, can reach it* [understanding]. For that talent is not given to the one who had received two – for the one who lives well in thought and action already has [everything] – but to the one who had received five. For that one does not yet have the mental perceptivity capable of contemplating eternal things who trusts in such visible and temporal things [as the senses] but he can have it if he will praise God the architect of all sensible things and will be convinced of God in faith, wait on God in hope, and seek God in love (*italics mine, uera rel.* 54.106).¹⁹⁵

This is a concise picture of Augustine's view of humanity in terms of natural ability and in terms of their hope in the kingdom of God. Those who are given one talent, the ability to understand spiritual things intellectually, and who live correctly in both thought and action will become like the perfect one with two talents, if they do not neglect this gift of spiritual knowledge and insight. On the other hand, those who 'are of slower understanding' can, by believing, though not understanding, the spiritual gospel of the Catholic church and by living diligently and piously as the scriptures and church instruct, gain the one talent of spiritual understanding. Thus, by devotion they also can become like the person with the two talents. The implication is that those of slower understanding need to be in a context in which they can understand what is to be believed and receive spiritual training to live 'diligently and piously' and thus 'prepare their mind's' eyes for the bright light of spiritual truth. They need to be in proximity to the church where such principles are taught and training offered. They also need to be in a position to receive the few salutary sacraments which unite all in the Catholic

¹⁹³ *Qui uero bene utitur uel ipsis quinque sensibus corporis ad credenda et praedicanda opera dei et nutriendam caritatem ipsius uel actione et cognitione ad pacificandam naturam suam et cognoscendum deum, intrat in gaudium domini sui. CCL 32. 255.*

¹⁹⁴ the term 'carnal', as was seen in *Gn. a. Man.* (cf. e.g. ch. 4 n. 208), did not always carry a pejorative sense in Augustine. Often it was simply a statement of fact about the ability of certain people (i.e. unable to grasp spiritual things with the mind). Prior to 390/391 such inability carried necessary implications for one's condition (e.g. how could one be considered spiritual if they could not grasp incorporeal reality?) but following *mus.* this was no longer necessarily the case.

¹⁹⁵ *Propterea talentum, quod male utenti aufertur, illi datur, qui talentis quinque bene usus est, non quia transferri potest acumen intellegentiae, sed ita significatum est posse hoc amittere negligentes et impios ingeniosos et ad eam peruenire diligentes et pios quamuis ingenio tardiores. Non enim datum est illud talentum ei, qui acceperat duo, – habet enim et hoc, qui iam in actione et in cognitione bene uiuit – sed ei, qui acceperat quinque. Nondum enim habet ad aeterna contemplanda idoneam mentis aciem, qui uisibilibus tantum, id est temporalibus credit, sed habere potest, qui horum omnium sensibilibus deum artificem laudat et eum persuadet fide et exspectat spe et quaerit caritate. CCL 32. 255.*

communion.¹⁹⁶ In the passage above, the idea that responsibility for spiritual edification was not confined to officials in the institutional church is also present. Augustine's feeling was that all those blessed with the one talent (a mind capable of spiritual understanding), who had come into the 'new' group of those possessing the two talents, have an obligation to be involved in the process of bringing those carnal believers of 'slower understanding' into the group of the two talents. 'For this is the law of divine providence, that no one is helped by [their] superiors in knowing or grasping the grace of God, who will not help with a pure affection their inferiors to the same' (*uera rel.* 27.51).¹⁹⁷

Augustine as Teacher of the Catholic Religion

Augustine responded to the responsibility for spiritual edification on him as an intellectual spiritual in a more communal way in 390, and this is evidenced in *On True Religion*. Augustine's idea of the methodology to train believers toward spiritual living and understanding is seen in a significant earlier chapter where he said, 'the Christian religion of our times ... can be defended¹⁹⁸ against the garrulous and opened for the seeking in many ways and proclaimed in many ways'; however, the method used with different people should be that one which 'is suitable for those with whom one is working' (*uera rel.* 10.19-20).¹⁹⁹ After considering his own phases of criticism and searching and the critics and seekers with which he had dealt, Augustine presented to the reader 'the method which I must use' as the attitude to be adopted in reading the rest of *On True Religion*:

That which you have understood as true thus far attribute to the Catholic church. What is dubious believe, until either reason teaches or authority commands what is to be rejected or what is true or what is to be believed always. Concentrate therefore diligently and piously on what follows, as much as you are able, for God helps such persons (*uera rel.* 10.20).²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ *uera rel.* 17.33: '[after Christ's work] a few most salutary sacraments were established to maintain the society of the Christian people, i.e. of the multitude of those free under [in service to] the one God' (*pauca sacramenta saluberrima constituta sunt, quae societatem Christiani populi, hoc est sub uno deo liberae multitudinis, continerent.* CCL 32. 207-208).

¹⁹⁷ *Haec enim lex est diuinae prouidentiae, ut nemo a superioribus adiuuetur ad cognoscendam et percipiendam gratiam dei, qui non ad eandem puro affectu inferiores adiuuerit.* CCL 32. 220-221.

¹⁹⁸ Augustine's 'defenses' of Christianity to this point are always aimed as much at Catholics, to keep them from entering error, as at opponents, to convert them from error; see e.g. *Gn. a. Man.*, cf. R.J. Teske, *FC* 84 (1991), 6-7f.

¹⁹⁹ *Ea est nostris temporibus Christiana religio, quam cognoscere ac sequi securissima ac certissima salus est.*

Defendi autem aduersus loquaces et aperiri quaerentibus multis modis potest omnipotente ipso deo per se ipsum demonstrante, quae uera sunt, et ad haec intuenda et percipienda bonas uoluntates per bonos angelos et quoslibet homines adiuuante. Eo modo autem quisque utitur, quem uidet congruere his, cum quibus agit. CCL 32. 200. See also *uera rel.* 17.34.

²⁰⁰ *Ego itaque diu multumque considerans, quales oblatrantes et quales quaerentes expertus sim uel qualis ipse siue cum latrarem siue cum quaererem fuerim, hoc modo mihi utendum putauit. Quae uera*

Here, Augustine is in the position of teacher of the Catholic religion, the first such clear identification.²⁰¹ Moreover, in presenting a general principle of instruction, he clearly indicated that both *spiritaes* and those not yet of spiritual understanding in the church ought to remain in touch with the Catholic church, ought to acknowledge the Catholic church, and ought to be involved in trying to understand its teachings by reason as much as possible.

Augustine's description of teachers in the writings of 390/391 is not radically changed from the picture presented in earlier writings. The teachers are great, learned and spiritual persons.²⁰² Yet, as in previous writings, no specific names, examples, or descriptions are given. A refinement was made, however, in the connection between the teachers of the church and the frequent mention of the reading and expounding the scriptures.²⁰³ Almost all of Augustine's references to teachers in *On True Religion* refer to individuals who have a defined teaching role within an identifiable ecclesial construct, such as established ascetic communities or specific churches.²⁰⁴ This exemplifies how, in Augustine's conception of 390, the worldwide movement of teaching and expounding the scriptures was linked to the church (by 'churches'). From Augustine's comments (e.g. *uera rel.* 10.20), it seems clear that he felt himself to be, and wanted to be, part of this movement. In order best to confirm his authority as the authority of the church, the Catholic teacher properly has a visible connection to the church, the primary bastion of God's truth on earth. This sense may have contributed to Augustine's desire for a clearly established 'monastery' in 391 as he identified (and

esse perspexeris tene et ecclesiae catholicae tribue, quae dubia crede, donec aut respuenda esse aut uera esse aut semper credenda esse uel ratio doceat uel praecipiat auctoritas. Intende igitur in haec quae sequuntur diligenter et pie, quantum potes. Tales enim adiuuat deus. CCL 32. 200.

²⁰¹ since *mor. ecc.*, Augustine had taken the role of Catholic teacher and defender (see ch. 3, p. 77-85) and later at Thagaste, at the end of *mus.*, he had identified his activity of defending the helpless Catholics from heretics with the activity of previous holy learned teachers in the church. Such activities were viewed within an ecclesial framework of the church as teacher. In *uera rel.*, Augustine took on the position of teacher within the overall framework of the church's propagation of true religion.

²⁰² e.g. *mus.* 6.17.59.

²⁰³ cf. *uera rel.* 3.4-5; 8.15-9.16; 17.33.

²⁰⁴ e.g.: *uera rel.* 3.4 summarizes the teaching of the church and ch. 3.5 explains how this was 'now read to the peoples throughout the world ... [i.e.] read daily in the churches and expounded by priests' (see n. 135, above); ch. 4.6 describes full Catholic churches where right holy spiritual exhortation was given, in contrast to what the Platonists 'failed to preach to the people' (see p. 217-218 and n. 168); ch. 6.11 notes that even ostracized godly Catholics defend and testify to the 'faith which they know is preached in the Catholic church' (see p. 234-235 and n. 253, below); in ch. 8.15 heretics are described as a stimulus for spiritual Catholics to seek and explain spiritual truth; indeed, this reveals the 'innumerable men approved by God' (cf. 1 Tim. 2.15) in the church (see discussion following); ch. 28.51 speaks of the learned spiritual men of the church providing for Catholic 'nurslings'; these men feed the multitude of the helpless in the context of God's general plan of bringing people to himself and in light of the dangers of the world (see n. 187 above); cf. also *uera rel.* 25.46-47; 16.30; 55.110.

moved toward) specific ecclesial forms which preserved the aspects of Christian life to which he was committed but facilitated his proper role in the overall Catholic communion.

Like the previous two emphases in Augustine's ecclesiological comments (*i.e.* the church as Catholic and as a place of spiritual healing), his emphasis on the church as teacher and his open identification with the teaching role derive from both the goal of true religion and his long held hierarchical conception of humanity. His view that there were 'spiritual' and 'carnal' Catholics in the church has already been discussed.²⁰⁵ In *On True Religion*, this two-fold concept of humanity was linked with the Pauline construct of the 'old man/new man' (in chapter 26.48-50).²⁰⁶ In chapter 26.48, Augustine described what 'is called the old man' (*Hic dicitur uetus homo*) and continued in chapter 26.49, saying,

some live the whole of life [this way] from beginning right up to the end, but some begin this life, by necessity, in that [state], yet they are born again internally and with spiritual strengthening and the increase of wisdom they destroy those members and restrain them into the laws of heaven ... This is called the new, interior, or heavenly person having spiritual ages measured not in years but in stages of progress.²⁰⁷

Thus, the end of the old man is sin and death, and the end of the new man is righteousness and eternal life.²⁰⁸ However, while it is possible to go through life on earth as an 'old man', because of the intrinsic corruption of the world, it is not possible completely to get away from the 'old' in this life after becoming 'new'.²⁰⁹ The teaching and training of the church was necessary to live the 'new' spiritual life optimally: for the carnal to keep from remaining, in this life, like the 'old'; for the spiritual to keep progressing as the 'new'.

Not surprisingly, the teaching or custodial aspect of the church also included the idea of the protection of the weak. The foundation and security of belief needed by those unable to progress by reason or defend themselves from heretics was within the church. 'To know and follow ['the Christian religion in our times'] is the most *secure* and certain salvation' (*uera rel.* 10.19).²¹⁰ The 'security of the Catholic faith' is the

²⁰⁵ cf. *uera rel.* 8.15; *mus.* 6.17.59; also see above, p. 205-208 and 211-212, and ch. 4 generally.

²⁰⁶ for Augustine, the 'old man' is not synonymous with the lower level (carnal) believer. As indicated, the life of the 'old man' is still possible for any in the Christian communion (esp. the carnal) and entailed along with rebellion from God the inappropriate focus on carnal things and the body.

²⁰⁷ *nonnulli totum agunt ab istius uitae ortu usque ad occasum, nonnulli autem uitam istam neccessario ab illo incipiunt, sed renascuntur interius et ceteras eius partes suo robore spiritali et incrementis sapientiae corrumpunt et necant et in caelestes leges, ... astringunt. Iste dicitur nouus homo et interior et caelestis habens et ipse proportionem non annis, sed prouectibus distinctas quasdam spirituales aetates suas.* CCL 32. 218.

²⁰⁸ *uera rel.* 26.49.

²⁰⁹ *uera rel.* 27.50.

²¹⁰ *Ea est nostris temporibus Christiana religio, quam cognoscere ac sequi securissima ac certissima salus est.* CCL 32. 200.

purpose of apologetic activity and the study of scripture.²¹¹ In fact, Augustine stated that even heretics ('outside the church') 'are useful not in teaching the truth, which they do not know, but in stirring up carnal Catholics to seek truth and spiritual Catholics to make it known' (*uera rel.* 8.15).²¹² The identification of such spiritual Catholic teachers can be made with Augustine himself. He was a 'spiritual Catholic', was involved in specific disputes with heretics like the Manichees, and was in 390/391 teaching on the true, Catholic religion in general. He saw the proclamations of the great, spiritual, and learned men of the church institutional and universal as the measure of the truth and had a developed sense that the standard of true teaching was within the Catholic church. This standard required propagation and explanation to those who had trouble grasping it. Thus, by 390, Augustine understood that his activities were in part a contribution to the church's custodial efforts for its children.

Augustine had come to believe that in God's plan of salvation, the church and its extension through the world were the natural continuation of the work of Christ and the preparatory work of the Old Testament.²¹³ Moreover, now that the church was spread throughout the world and since it was the possessor of unquestionable truth in God's plan, it was able to benefit even from adverse groups and situations. Augustine wrote,

For the Catholic church, diffused strongly and broadly through the whole world, uses all who err for its advance and for their correction, when they are willing to be aroused. ... To all it gives the capacity for participation in the grace of God, whether ones still to be formed or still to be reformed, whether admitted for the first time or gathered in again. But its carnal members, *i.e.* those living or sensing carnally, it tolerates like chaff by which the grain is protected on the threshing-floor until it is stripped of its lesser covering (*uera rel.* 6.10).²¹⁴

The church was viewed as unassailable and secure.

For it uses nations for the material of its operations, uses heretics for the proving of its doctrine, uses schismatics for proof of its stability, and uses the Jews for comparison to (preparation for) its own beauty. Some it invites, others it excludes, others it abandons, and others it overtakes (*uera rel.* 6.10).²¹⁵

²¹¹ *uera rel.* 8.14-16.

²¹² *Ex his enim hominibus haeretici fiunt, qui etiamsi essent in ecclesia, nihilominus errarent, cum autem foris sunt, plurimum prosunt non uerum docendo quod nesciunt, sed ad uerum quaerendum carnales et ad uerum aperiendum spirituales catholicos excitando.* CCL 32. 197. *Gn. a. Man.* was one example of Augustine's attempt to expound Catholic truth in response to heretics.

²¹³ cf. *uera rel.* 16.30-17.34; discussed above, p. 214.

²¹⁴ *Haec enim ecclesia catholica per totum orbem ualide lateque diffusa omnibus errantibus utitur ad prouectus suos et ad eorum correctionem, cum euigilare uoluerint. ... omnibus tamen gratiae dei participandae dat potestatem, siue illi formandi sint adhuc siue reformandi siue recolligendi siue admittendi. Carnales autem suos, id est uiuentes aut sentientes carnaliter tamquam paleas tolerat, quibus in area frumenta tutiora sunt, donec talibus tegminibus exuantur.* CCL 32. 194.

²¹⁵ *Utitur enim gentibus ad materiam operationis suae, haereticis ad probationem doctrinae suae, schismaticis ad documentum stabilitatis suae, Iudaeis ad comparisonem pulchritudinis suae. Alios ergo inuitat, alios excludit, alios relinquit, alios antecedit ...* CCL 32. 194.

Augustine went on to elaborate the results of the church's universal activity relative to other religious groups. When its true religion was believed and pursued, spiritual people were produced who followed 'a manner of life, reconciled and conformed to the divine commands which will cleanse the mind and make the mind able to perceive spiritual things' (*uera rel.* 7.13).²¹⁶ This was the proper result of a life governed by the love of God.²¹⁷ If people will come to the church to hear and believe true religion, they will have 'the redemption of the body' (*uera rel.* 21.41).²¹⁸ 'When the soul has been regenerated through the grace of God and restored to wholeness, and made subject to the one [God], by whom it was created, with its body restored to its original strength', Augustine concluded that it will begin to live the religious ascetic life.²¹⁹ As seen previously, the principal visible manifestation of the teaching and healing of the church was the ascetic nature of its universal communion. Thus, as part of God's plan, the church had been equipped with his truth and had been spread over the world in order to propagate (in all conditions and contexts) the possibility of spiritual healing leading to a life of love for God, that is, seeking him spiritually and living to this end ascetically.

In summary, Augustine had achieved a coherent understanding of the church of his day in terms of teacher, hospital, and ascetic community – as the vehicle for God's plan to facilitate the attainment of the spiritual (religious) life. In light of its place in history, the church was understood as the conclusion of God's temporal dispensation and as a world-wide phenomenon. In this general aspect as the disseminator of true religion, the church fitted into Augustine's overall religious synthesis. For Augustine, at this time, the church was the sole home and principle means of communicating and exemplifying and equipping for the divine goal of true religion. He was committed to participating in it more directly in teaching and ascetic pursuits. It still remains, to consider the refinements and developments which emerge in his ideas of the institutional church, his beliefs of and about the church, and the practical outworking of his ecclesial understanding. Nevertheless, it is clear that in 391 Augustine saw the universal church as fundamentally important to any Christian's life before God.

²¹⁶ *Huius religionis sectandae caput est historia et prophetia dispensationis temporalis diuinae prouidentiae pro salute generis humani in aeternam uitam reformandi atque reparandi. Quae cum credita fuerit, mentem purgabit uitae modus diuinis praeceptis conciliatus et idoneam faciet spiritualibus percipiendis, quae nec praeterita sunt nec futura, sed eodem modo semper manentia nulli mutabilitati obnoxia ...* CCL 32. 196.

²¹⁷ *uera rel.* 45.86.

²¹⁸ *Habebit enim etiam consequentem redemptionem corporis sui, quod iam non corrumpetur.* CCL 32. 213 (as a consequence of finding a spiritual nature).

²¹⁹ *uera rel.* 23.44; see n. 176 for Latin.

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION

One area where evidence of Augustine's ecclesiological development and synthesis is found is in his description of the church as an institution and his developing ecclesiastical vocabulary. Terms such as 'communion' (*communicanda sacramenta* or *catholica communione*, *uera rel.* 5.8; 5.9 respectively), 'sacrament' (*sacramenta*, 5.8), 'Catholic' (as a meaningful descriptive adjective not just as a title, *passim*), and 'orthodox' (*orthodoxi*, 5.9) are used with familiarity. Significantly, Augustine's first specifically ecclesial mention of the sacraments and the worship of the saints is found at this time. From the outset of *On True Religion*, the description of 'true religion' has noticeable institutional, sacramental, and ritual elements. Augustine spoke of the 'people of Christ' (*populo Christiano*, *uera rel.* 6.11)²²⁰ in the sense of community or congregation. In contrast, his repudiation of those who could not come under the rubric of true religion included those who 'deviate from the rule and the *communion of the Catholic faith* and those who refuse to hold/receive the light of its scriptures or the grace of its spiritual people, which is called the New Testament' (italics mine, *uera rel.* 7.12).²²¹ Further, Augustine spoke of returning to the community of the church by 'repentance' (*uera rel.* 14.27).²²² In particular, ecclesiastical terminology in chapters 7.13-8.14, where Augustine made indirect reference to the creed by listing all of its elements as the beliefs which were held by the Catholic communion,²²³ and in chapter 50.99 also demonstrates greater familiarity with the institutional church than was evident earlier, even at Thagaste.

In a revealing statement, Augustine contrasted the people of God in 'the time of servitude under the old law' who were 'constrained and burdened with many sacraments' with those in his present situation, in the age of Christ and the church, where a 'few most salutary sacraments were appointed to maintain the society of the Christian people, i.e. of the multitude of those free under [in service to] the one God' (*uera rel.* 17.33).²²⁴ According to Augustine, the people of God under the old law

²²⁰ CCL 32. 195.

²²¹ *Repudiatis igitur omnibus, qui neque in sacris philosophantur nec in philosophia consecrantur, et his, qui uel praua opinione uel aliqua simultate superbientes a regula et communione ecclesiae catholicae deuierunt, et his, qui suarum scripturarum lumen et spiritalis populi gratiam, quod nouum testamentum uocatur, habere noluerunt.* CCL 32. 196; mention of the 'Catholic communion' is repeated again in the same section.

²²² *Non autem recte negat peccasse animam, qui et paenitendo eam corrigi fatetur et ueniam paenitenti dari et perseuerantem in peccatis iusta dei lege damnari.* CCL 32. 204.

²²³ see discussion below, p. 233f. and n. 243.

²²⁴ *Nunc uero, quoniam pietas timore incohatur, caritate perficitur, populus timore constrictus tempore seruitutis in uetere lege multis sacramentis onerabatur. Hoc enim utile talibus erat ad desiderandam gratiam dei, quae per prophetas uentura caneatur. Quae ubi uenit, ab ipsa dei sapientia homine assumpto, a quo in libertatem uocati sumus, pauca sacramenta saluberrima constituta sunt, quae societatem Christiani populi, hoc est sub uno deo liberae multitudinis, continerent.* CCL 32. 207-208.

were constrained by their many sacraments, but the 'new people' of God, under his love, were maintained by the few unifying sacraments of Christ's church. In this way, a direct link is made between the coherence of the Christian community and the sacraments. They serve to bind the universal society of Christian believers together and provide continuity as it develops.²²⁵

The connection between beliefs, rites, and universal communion is also made in *On True Religion's* (5.8-9) description of how the Catholic church related to heretical and schismatic groups. Once again, the sacraments are used to set apart the true Catholic community. Heretics 'have turned away from the rule of [faith of] Christianity' and are 'not admitted to the communication of the sacraments' (*uera rel.* 5.8),²²⁶ implying not only the idea of failing in doctrine but also in practice. Moreover,

it is believed and taught, as a principal point of human salvation, that philosophy, *i.e.* the pursuit of wisdom, is not wholly separate from religion, since those of whose doctrine we do not approve, do not share the sacraments with us.

This is little wonder in the case of those who have wished to be separate in their sacramental rites [like the Manichees or Ophites] ... It is more so in those ... who celebrate sacraments like [ours] yet, because they are different in thinking [doctrine] and prefer to defend their errors passionately rather than to carefully correct them, [*e.g.* the Photinians and Arians]²²⁷ have deserved to be excluded from the Catholic communion and from participation in the sacraments ... But concerning those who have caused schisms, it is another matter. For the threshing-floor of the Lord could have preserved them up until the time of the final winnowing, unless they had been carried away by the wind of pride with great levity, and separated themselves from us of their own accord. ... since these things are so, religion is to be sought neither in the confusion of the pagans, nor in the filth of the heretics, nor in the lethargy of the schismatics, nor in the blindness of the Jews, but only with those who are called Catholic or orthodox Christians, *i.e.* custodians of purity and followers of right (*uera rel.* 5.8-9).²²⁸

²²⁵ cf. *uera rel.* 3.5. The sacraments are necessary, but are few. There is no implication here of mandatory or frequent attendance of all the ministrations of the sacraments in the church, but rather a clear sense that with some regularity the basic sacramental observances of the church were necessary.

²²⁶ *Haereses namque tam innumerabiles a regula Christianitatis auersae testes sunt non admitti ad communicanda sacramenta eos, qui de patre deo et sapientia eius et munere diuino aliter sentiunt et hominibus persuadere conantur quam ueritas postulat.* CCL 32. 193.

²²⁷ see J.S. Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (1953), 230.

²²⁸ *Sic enim creditur et docetur, quod est humanae salutis caput, non aliam esse philosophiam, id est sapientiae studium, et aliam religionem, cum hi, quorum doctrinam non approbamus, nec sacramenta nobiscum communicant.*

Quod in illis minus mirandum est, qui eorum quoque sacramentorum ritu dispares esse uoluerunt, sicut nescio qui Serpentine qui appellantur, sicut Manichaei, sicut alii nonnulli. Sed in illis magis animaduertendum hoc magisque praecauendum, qui paria sacramenta celebrantes tamen, quia sententia dispares sunt et errores suos animosius defendere quam cautius corrigere maluerunt, exclusi a catholica communione et a participatione quamuis parium sacramentorum propria uocabula propriosque conuentus non in sermone tantum, sed etiam in superstitione meruerunt, ut Photiniani et Ariani multique praeterea. Nam de his, qui schismata fecerunt, alia quaestio est. Posset enim eos area dominica usque ad tempus ultimae uentilationis uelut paleas sustinere, nisi uento superbiae nimia leuitate cessissent et sese a nobis ultro separassent. ... Quae cum ita sint, neque in confusione paganorum neque in purgamentis haereticorum neque in languore schismaticorum neque in caecitate Iudaeorum quaerenda religio est, sed apud eos solos, qui Christiani catholici uel orthodoxi nominantur, id est integritatis custodes et recta sectantes. CCL 32. 193-194.

The complementary nature of philosophy and religion in Augustine's mind is familiar. The detailed distinction from heretics, schismatics, etc., however, especially in terms of sacramental rites, is definitely new. Not to share in the Catholic *rites* was to be outside the Catholic communion – such were heretics. For schismatics, not to share in the *Catholic* rites was to be excluded from the communion of believers (voluntarily) before the final judgment. Ultimately, not one of the groups Augustine listed can offer the whole of religion (doctrine, life, community, worship, or sacramental efficacy and coherence) contained within the Catholic church. True religion was (virtually by definition) within the church.

Surprisingly, in his understanding of the value of communal unity and sacraments in the Catholic church, Augustine did not emphasize particular processes or rites of entry into the church, namely catechetical instruction and baptism. In places, the reader might expect such references. For example, when discussing the special saving work of God in *On True Religion* chapter 16.30, Augustine interjected, 'Concerning these things it is either not to be discussed or it is to be discussed [only] among the pious and perfect'²²⁹ before going on to allude to the incarnation and work of Christ. It is possible that an allusion is being made in this passage to catechetical instruction,²³⁰ but the exact meaning of this aside is unclear.²³¹ Most likely, the strong element of secrecy which surrounded baptism in Augustine's time (concerning preparatory instruction and especially the passing on of the creed) is reflected here in his writing. In this light, the numerous references and allusions to Christian teaching (and teachers) should be interpreted to also include catechetical instruction.²³²

One final aspect central to Augustine's understanding of religion and the Christian community is worship. He told his readers 'we must consider which men or books we should believe in order to worship God rightly, which is the only salvation' (*uera rel.* 25.46).²³³ The opening line of *On True Religion*, 'The good and blessed life is to be

²²⁹ *Sed cum omnibus modis medeatur animis deus pro temporum opportunitatibus, quae mira sapientia eius ordinantur, de quibus aut non est tractandum aut inter pios perfectosque tractandum est.* CCL 32. 205.

²³⁰ see p. 219-220.

²³¹ it may be that as a Christian who was able to understand spiritual things Augustine simply did not want to overwhelm his audience among whom there may be many of the carnal of 'slower understanding'. In this sense, the 'perfect and pious' would be those capable of understanding the spiritual truth of the incarnation and work of Christ.

²³² cf. the earlier sections which described the spread of the church through the world in terms of the preaching of the gospel, the hearing and response of people to this preaching, and their adoption of submission to Catholic authority and the ascetic life of devotion to God. The rites of entry into the communion of the faithful are presumed and yet skipped over entirely. Augustine explained later, shortly after arriving in Hippo, to bishop Valerius that he *had* thought about the responsibility of this kind of instruction and was familiar with it, although he had not yet made what he considered sufficient study to practice it (*ep.* 21.2-3).

²³³ *sed nostrum est considerare, quibus uel hominibus uel libris credendum sit ad colendum recte deum, quae una salus est.* CCL 32. 216.

found entirely in the true religion wherein one God is worshipped and acknowledged with purest piety',²³⁴ illustrates the centrality of worship to Augustine's entire understanding of the Catholic faith. As seen earlier at Rome and Thagaste, for Augustine, the personal life of spiritual devotion was included as Christian worship.²³⁵ Yet, his idea of worship included more than just the individual offering of oneself in submission of faith and service to God. In chapter 55.108, worship is defined as to 'adore with religious rites [cult]'.²³⁶ In connection with previous comments about the sacraments, it is clear that worship encompasses corporate ritual observance. Throughout this series of chapters (*i.e.* *uera rel.* 55.108-110), Augustine discussed what 'our religion should not consist in'. He did this by listing what 'we must not worship'.²³⁷ Even concerning the angels and their perfect souls, he said, 'the highest angel worships God who is also to be worshipped by the lowest of humans. ... We should believe that the highest angels and most excellent ministers of God desire that we should worship the one God with them by the contemplation of whom they are made happy' (*uera rel.* 55.110).²³⁸ The proper course of life is to 'bind (*religare*) ourselves to the one [God]' and from this, Augustine explained, 'it is believed, religion has received its name' (*uera rel.* 55.111).²³⁹ Unfortunately, he did not give many specific examples of forms of individual and corporate worship he might mean or have practiced, other than reading scripture and expounding it. Such lack of evidence led TeSelle to comment: 'One could not guess from the writings of Rome and Thagaste that Augustine attended church at all, and there is little to indicate the nature of his

²³⁴ see n. 126 above for Latin.

²³⁵ cf. *e.g.* ch. 3, p. 113 and 119-121.

²³⁶ (on the worship of men) *Non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum, quia si pie uixerunt non sic habentur, ut tales quaerant honores, sed illum a nobis coli uolunt, quo illuminante laetantur meriti sui nos esse consortes. Honorandi ergo sunt propter imitationem, non adorandi propter religionem.* CCL 32. 256.

²³⁷ namely, fantastic religious imaginings, the soul, physical things, idols, inanimate things, beasts, people (dead or living), demons, the elements, heavenly bodies, life (organic or sentient), the 'perfectly rational wise soul', or angels (who possess such souls); cf. *uera rel.* 37.68 (CCL 32. 256-258).

²³⁸ *Quod colit ergo summus angelus, id colendum est etiam ab homine ultimo, quia ipsa hominis natura id non colendo facta est ultima. ... Hoc etiam ipsos optimos angelos et excellentissima ministeria dei uelle credamus, ut unum cum ipsis colamus deum, cuius contemplatione beati sunt.* CCL 32. 257-258.

²³⁹ *Iusti autem homines et in uno deo habentes omnia gaudia sua, quando per eorum facta deus benedicatur, congratulantur laudantibus, cum uero ipsi tamquam ipsi laudantur, corrigunt errantes, quos possunt; quos autem non possunt, non eis gratulantur et ab illo uitio corrigi uolunt. Quibus similes uel etiam mundiores atque sanctiores si sunt boni angeli et omnia sancta dei ministeria, quid metuimus, ne aliquem illorum offendamus, si non superstitiosi fuerimus, cum ipsis adiuuantibus ad unum deum tendentes et ei uni religantes animas nostras, unde religio dicta creditur, omni superstitione careamus?* (underlining mine) CCL 32. 259. This passage is interesting also for its concern (the concern of godly persons) to deflect human praise from oneself to God and the sense that this was a present concern to Augustine.

relationship with the broader Christian community'.²⁴⁰ Although TeSelle is correct with respect to explicit statements of attendance, there are direct indications of Augustine's increasing familiarity with the local/institutional church in 390 and early 391. The lack of hard evidence for attendance probably corresponds to the fact that Augustine was in fact not a regular in church. Nevertheless, his discussion of individual churches and the Christian instruction and preaching in them, his attention to the church's unifying sacraments and worship, and his articulation of the central beliefs of the church which were passed on to all its adherents,²⁴¹ all demonstrate that the nature and activities of the Christian community were more familiar and important to Augustine in 390. As he decided to pursue a monastic vocation, Augustine's increasingly institutional understanding of the church (seen also in his more ecclesiastical vocabulary) surely became important for his thought about the church.

BELIEFS OF AND ABOUT THE CHURCH

Augustine considered certain beliefs to be central to the Catholic church and the precepts of Christianity. These are certainly significant for appreciating his overall religious synthesis of 390, and some of them are beliefs about the church. In *On True Religion* (8.14), Augustine listed 'those things which at first we only believed, following authority, [but] which by stages are understood':²⁴²

The most holy taking on of humanity, the birth from a virgin, the death of the Son of God for us, [his] resurrection from the dead, ascension into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of the Father, the abolition of sins, the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body ...²⁴³

The credal order here is unmistakable, again probably pointing to closer ecclesiastical connections, or at least consideration. Central Christian beliefs, such as belief in the Trinity, are important throughout *On True Religion* not only as dogma but as things which, when explained and understood spiritually, are among the highest marks of perfection and happiness in the contemplation of God.²⁴⁴ As indicated, Augustine viewed the enablement of spiritual understanding and appreciation of such beliefs as an important work of the church and of his activity in it. Moreover, these beliefs and a right understanding of them in a sense defined the Catholic church. In the case of the

²⁴⁰ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 132.

²⁴¹ see discussion following and esp. n. 243.

²⁴² *ex quo illa omnia, quae primo credidimus nihil nisi auctoritatem secuti, partim sic intelleguntur.* CCL 32. 197.

²⁴³ *Non enim iam illa hominis sacrosancta susceptio et uirginis partus et mors filii dei pro nobis et resurrectio a mortuis et in caelum ascensio et consessus ad dexteram patris et peccatorum abolitio et iudicii dies et corporum resuscitatio cognita aeternitate trinitatis et mutabilitate creaturae creduntur tantum ...* CCL 32. 197.

²⁴⁴ e.g. *uera rel.* 7.13-8.14.

Trinity, the mark of 'innumerable heresies' was that they 'endeavor to persuade others to think incorrectly of God the Father, his wisdom [Son], and the divine gift [Spirit] than the truth demands' (*uera rel.* 5.8).²⁴⁵ Other significant areas of belief that are discussed throughout *On True Religion* include sin and the incarnation.²⁴⁶ For example, in connection with 'sin', concepts of the fall and of original sin are encountered.²⁴⁷ The primary significance, however, of such discussions for Augustine's emerging ecclesiology lies in the framework they create of God's overarching plan of salvation through history.²⁴⁸

A specific look at ecclesiological beliefs within the whole corpus of Augustine's Catholic beliefs at the time yields greater insight into his understanding of the church, since many of the significant refinements in Augustine's developing understanding of Christian doctrine in the last year at Thagaste pertain directly to ecclesiology. The idea of catholicity,²⁴⁹ for example, is not new to Augustine in 390 (not even a theological understanding and use of it) but becomes refined in the understanding of catholicity as deriving from the unity of God himself and from charity.²⁵⁰ This unity and charity reinforces Catholic authority: 'Just as in the human race there is no power in the multitude unless of agreement (*i.e.* being one in opinion) so in religion. The authority of those who call to unity ought to be considered greater and more worthy of faith' (*uera rel.* 25.46).²⁵¹

On True Religion chapter 6.11 contains a striking example of the supremacy of unity based on charity within the Catholic church. In this passage, Augustine described 'even good men' whom 'often divine providence allows to be expelled from the Christian community through certain excessive and stormy seditions of carnal people'.²⁵² These godly men endured such injustice 'with the greatest patience for the sake of the peace of the church'. Nor did they respond by initiating any new kind of 'schism or heresy'. Naturally, their desire was to return to the Catholic fold when the

²⁴⁵ see n. 226 for Latin; for other uses and descriptions of the Trinity, see esp. *uera rel.* 7.13; 14.28; 18.35; and 43.81.

²⁴⁶ the latter has been mentioned above, see p. 214-216.

²⁴⁷ e.g. *uera rel.* 12.28 (where he speaks of man's temptation by the wicked angel); 20.38; 34.63-64; and 37.68 (concerning the sin of the first man or the origin of impiety). See also *diu. qu.* 30. In conjunction with this, Augustine's understanding of evil is set out in *uera rel.* 23.44.

²⁴⁸ e.g. the church is the mediator of the work of Christ to save people from sin.

²⁴⁹ see esp. *uera rel.* 3.5; 6.10; and 7.12.

²⁵⁰ see *uera rel.* 25.45-46; 46.88-89; and 55.107.

²⁵¹ *Sicut enim in ipsa rerum natura maior est auctoritas unius ad unum omnia redigentis nec in genere humano multitudinis ulla potentia est nisi consentientis, id est unum sentientis, ita in religione, qui ad unum uocant, eorum maior et fide dignior esse debet auctoritas.* CCL 32. 216.

²⁵² whom Augustine might have in mind in this passage is most uncertain, esp. since he claimed to be aware of more than one such person.

reason for their ouster had subsided. But Augustine noted with great admiration that if that was not possible because

either the same tempest continued or, with their return, might arise again or more fiercely; they keep hold of their resolution to have regard even for those same ones whose commotions and [church political] disturbances drove them out. Without any separate assemblies [they go on] defending to the death and delighting to testify to that faith which they know is preached in the Catholic church.²⁵³

Despite being expelled by the Catholic communion, such godly humble people were crowned in secret by the 'Father, seeing in secret' (cf. Mt. 6.6, 18).²⁵⁴ Interestingly, Augustine indicated that while such Christians would be thought to be rare, in fact 'examples are not wanting. Indeed, there are more than can be believed. Thus divine providence uses all kinds of people and examples to care for souls and to establish his spiritual people'.²⁵⁵ Aside from indicating that the kind of unjust exile described here occurred sporadically in the church, the implication is that one need not even be 'within' the visible Christian communion (let alone have an office) to be involved in the 'care and building up' of those within. Even outside the visible boundaries of the church, the two-fold body of Christ exists (i.e. Catholic Christian spiritual and, by implication, carnal ones). Augustine's increasing awareness of the troubles faced in North Africa by the Catholic church on account of the Donatists might have been a precipitating factor in such a statement even though no specific input from this quarter can be identified.²⁵⁶

In his discussion of the unity of the church, Augustine soon turned to the question of historical changes in church practice:

²⁵³ *Saepe etiam sinit diuina prouidentia per nonnullas nimium turbulentas carnalium hominum seditiones expelli de populo Christiano etiam bonos uiros. Quam contumeliam uel iniuriam suam cum patientissime pro ecclesiae pace tulerint neque ullas nouitates uel schismatis uel haeresis moliti fuerint, docebunt homines, quam uero affectu et quanta sinceritate caritatis deo seruiendum sit. Talium igitur uirorum propositum est aut sedatis remeare turbinibus aut, si id non sinantur – uel eadem tempestate perseuerante uel ne suo reditu talis aut saeuior oriatur – tenent uoluntatem consulendi etiam eis ipsis, quorum motibus perturbationibusque cesserunt sine ulla conuenticulatorum segregatione usque ad mortem defendentes et testimonio iuuantes eam fidem, quam in ecclesia catholica praedicari sciunt.* CCL 32. 195.

²⁵⁴ *Hos coronat in occulto pater in occulto uidens.* CCL 32. 195.

²⁵⁵ *Rarum hoc uidetur genus, sed tamen exempla non desunt; immo plura sunt, quam credi potest. Ita omnibus generibus hominum et exemplorum ad animarum curationem et ad insitutionem spiritualis populi utitur diuina prouidentia.* CCL 32. 195.

²⁵⁶ that the Donatists were strong in Thagaste is made clear in *ep.* 93.5.17 (CSEL 34.2.2. 461-462). See also E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 126: 'Indeed, there may have been an equally strong stimulus from within the Christian tradition, for Augustine had probably begun reading some of the literature of African Christianity with its strong emphasis on the Church, such as Cyprian's *On the Unity of the Church* and *On the Lord's Prayer*'.

But we heard that our elders (predecessors) in that step, by which one ascends from the temporal to the eternal, followed visible miracles – they were able to do no other. This was done by them so that it should not be necessary for their successors (*uera rel.* 25.47).²⁵⁷

Such considerations, and Augustine's responses to them, evidence a conceptual synthesis in his understanding of the church as it relates to the world and to history.²⁵⁸ TeSelle has noted, 'One of the new elements of Augustine's thought at this time is an awareness of the *dispensatio temporalis*, the pattern of God's saving activity from the beginning to the end of the human race'.²⁵⁹ Augustine's comment on the decreased frequency of miracles exemplifies some aspects of his understanding:

For when the Catholic church had been founded and diffused through the whole earth, those miracles were not permitted to continue in our time, lest the mind should always seek visible things and the human race should grow cold with the commonness of things which kindled [its attention/consideration] when they were novelties. Nor ought we now to doubt that those are to be believed who proclaimed these things [miracles], which only a few had actually seen, and still were able to persuade the peoples to follow them. At that time, it was considered (pursued) what ought to be believed before anyone was fit to reason concerning divine and invisible things (*uera rel.* 25.47).²⁶⁰

In the time of Christ and immediately following, people were not generally ready to comprehend spiritual truth, even though the one God had been rightly worshipped by the Jews in the Old Testament.²⁶¹ After this discussion of miracles, Augustine proceeded to describe what was handed over concerning 'the temporal dispensation and medicine of divine providence towards those who by sin had rightly merited mortality' (*uera rel.* 26.48).²⁶² He noted that the origin of Christianity was historically valid, it

²⁵⁷ *Sed accepimus maiores nostros eo gradu, quo a temporalibus ad aeterna conscenditur, uisibilia miracula – non enim aliter poterant – secutos esse, per quos id actum est, ut necessaria non essent posteris.* CCL 32. 216.

²⁵⁸ the culmination of a line of thought which probably had begun in Milan (*cf.* ch. 3, p. 103 and 110 esp. n. 297-299), but certainly at Rome (*cf. mor. ecc.* 7.12; 9.15) and continued in the first years at Thagaste (*cf.* ch. 4, p. 163f.).

²⁵⁹ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 130 (citing *uera rel.* 7.13; 10.19; etc.; *f. et symb.* 4.6 and 6.8; *diu. qu.* 57.2). See J.S. Burleigh's introduction to *uera rel.* in *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (1953), 224, for a summary of the concept of God's temporal dispensation in an outline of the argument of Augustine's text.

²⁶⁰ *Cum enim ecclesia catholica per totum orbem diffusa atque fundata sit, nec miracula illa in nostra tempora durare permissa sunt, ne anima semper uisibilia quaereret et eorum consuetudine frigesceret genus humanum, quorum nouitate flagrauit, nec iam nobis dubium esse oportet his esse credendum, qui cum ea praedicent, quae pauci assequuntur, se tamen sequendos populis persuadere potuerunt. Nunc enim agitur, quibus credendum sit, antequam quisque sit idoneus ineundae rationi de diuinis et inuisibilibus rebus.* CCL 32. 216-217.

²⁶¹ *uera rel.* 3.4. Hence, miracles played the role of drawing attention to Christ and of proving tangibly the validity of the message of his person and work. Once there was sufficient diffusion of this truth, the resultant changed lives (and esp. minds/souls) provided ample testimony of the truth of the Christian message. The continuation of regular miracles would have actually served to retain focus and expectation upon the visible and tangible and could not have been relied on over time to continue to win over people for spiritual truth.

²⁶² *Dispensatio ergo temporalis et medicina diuinae prouidentiae erga eos, qui peccato mortalitatem meruerunt, sic traditur.* CCL 32. 217.

'is celebrated in books and documents', and later he made the statement that in following true religion 'the principal thing is the histories and prophecies of the temporal dispensation of divine providence for the salvation of the human race, transforming and renewing unto eternal life' (*uera rel.* 7.13).²⁶³ The historical basis of the faith is an integral part of the authority of the church.²⁶⁴ TeSelle follows Augustine's discussion on this point:

'The chief argument for following this religion', he says, 'is history' (*De ver. rel.*, 7, 13). Certain things have been done and they have been attested by writings and other proofs; and beginning from the one region where God was properly worshipped, the word has gone throughout the whole earth and has been believed everywhere (*De ver. rel.*, 3, 4).²⁶⁵

Augustine encouraged his readers to 'distinguish how much we ought to trust in history and how much we ought to trust in intelligence' (*uera rel.* 50.99),²⁶⁶ not because these are exclusive but because both are necessary. For Augustine, the unity of the church in his day was based upon the unity of the church with God's plan and people throughout history.

Thus, Augustine's understanding of the church in the world and history was not just confined to a consolidated understanding of the historical events upon which the Christian faith was founded (and from which it is preached). The eschatological understanding of the future of the Christian communion is seen in chapter 23.44:

there will be, it is written, a new heaven and a new earth, for souls no longer toiling in part (of it) but reigning over the whole. 'All things are yours', says the Apostle, 'and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God' [1 Cor. 11.3] ... The beauty of the whole creation is free from all culpability through these three things: the condemnation of sinners, the training of the just, and the perfection of the blessed.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ *Huius religionis sectandae caput est historia et prophetia dispensationis temporalis diuinae prouidentiae pro salute generis humani in aeternam uitam reformandi atque reparandi.* CCL 32. 196. The practice in *Gn. a. Man.* of seeing the church as a continuous entity throughout human history is now normative; cf. ch. 4, p. 164f. In 390, however, this view had filled out in its understanding and appreciation of the church in the 'Age of Christ and the Church' (i.e. the sixth age of biblical history) first discussed in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23. For example, Augustine described not just the general 'spiritual' or 'carnal', or simply the people of God, but two classes of people with relatives throughout history in an articulated progression with specific contrasts (e.g. the 'new people' in contrast to the 'old man'; the impious and the devoted to God; the description as earthly in contrast to angelic (*uera rel.* 28.51)). On the two classes idea of *uera rel.* reaching its fulfillment in *ciu.*, see G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 109-110.

²⁶⁴ Augustine's comprehensive understanding of true religion focused on its truth, its universal diffusion, and its propagation through history. This framework, from God, made the church of Augustine's day far greater than the sum of its parts in his eyes.

²⁶⁵ E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 125.

²⁶⁶ *Distinguiamus ergo, quam fidem debeamus historiae, quam fidem debeamus intellegentiae.* CCL 32. 251.

²⁶⁷ *erit, ut scriptum est, caelum nouum et terra noua non in parte laborantibus animis, sed in uniuersitate regnantibus. 'Omnia enim uestra', inquit apostolus, 'uos autem Christi, Christus autem dei', ... Et est pulchritudo uniuersae creaturae per haec tria inculpabilis: damnatione peccatorum, excercitatione iustorum, perfectione beatorum.* CCL 32. 215.

Augustine had achieved an over-arching construct which Burleigh has noted contained the 'seminal idea of the *De Civitate Dei*'.²⁶⁸ From this framework, Augustine spoke of the 'kingdom of God' (*regnum dei*) being possessed to the extent to which one lived spiritually and not carnally.²⁶⁹ In a revealing section, noted by Burleigh and Bonner among others, Augustine wrote,

Thus in analogy, the entire human race, whose life is like that of one person, from Adam up to the end of this age, is so directed under the laws of divine providence that it appears divided into two races. In one of these is the multitude of the impious, bearing the image of the earthly man from the beginning of the world up to the end. In the other is the line of the people devoted to the one God, but who from Adam up to John the Baptist were bearing the life of the earthly man, slaves to a certain justice. The history of these [latter ones] is called the Old Testament, as if promising an earthly kingdom, which is nothing other than the image of the new people and the New Testament, promising the kingdom of heaven. ... After the judgment the old man will pass away, the change which promises the angelic life. ... [1 Cor. 15.51] ... Those who read diligently will discover the divisions of the ages, and they will not shudder with the terror of tares or chaff. For the impious live with the pious and the sinner with the just, so that by comparison people may rise up to perfection more eagerly.

But when any of the earthly people at any time [in the past] deserved to reach to the illumination of the interior man, he helped the human race, showing them on account of the time what that age required and intimating that through the prophets what it was not [yet] suitable to display openly. Such patriarchs and prophets are found by those who do not act childishly, but piously and diligently handle (study) [scripture] as a good and great secret of divine human things [relations] (*uera rel.* 27.50-28.51).²⁷⁰

The references here to the 'earthly man', the 'earthly kingdom', and the 'earthly people' follow from Augustine's first discussion of the world around him, which embodied carnal living, as an 'earthly city' (*uera rel.* 26.48).²⁷¹ Other ideas which appear in consolidated form in his *City of God* are present in 390 in *On True Religion* and

²⁶⁸ commenting on chapter 27.50 in particular, J.S. Burleigh, *Augustine: Earlier Writings* (1953), 223; see also G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534; and G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Ciuitate dei (De-)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 7/8 (1994), 1004-1005, where he notes that *uera rel.* (specifically 27.50), 'written in 390', anticipates in several respects the ideas of *ciu*. For a detailed discussion of the similarities, see G. Madec, 'Le *De ciuitate Dei* comme *De uera religione*', *Interiorita e intenzionalita nel 'De Civitate Dei' di Sant Agostino* (1991), 7-33.

²⁶⁹ *uera rel.* 12.23.

²⁷⁰ *sic proportione uniuersum genus humanum, cuius tamquam unius hominis uita est ab Adam usque ad finem huius saeculi, ita sub diuinae prouidentiae legibus administratur, ut in duo genera distributum appareat. Quorum in uno est turba impiorum terreni hominis imaginem ab initio saeculi usque ad finem gerentium, in altero series populi uni deo dediti, sed ab Adam usque ad Iohannem Baptistam terreni hominis uitam gerentis seruili quadam iustitia, cuius historia uetus testamentum uocatur, quasi terrenum pollicens regnum, quae tota nihil est aliud quam imago noui populi et noui testamenti pollicentis regnum caelorum. ... Post quod iudicium uetere homine extincto erit illa mutatio, quae angelicam uitam pollicetur. ... Aetatum autem articulos, qui diligenter legunt, inueniunt nec zizania nec paleas perhorrescunt. Impius namque pio uiuit et peccator iusto, ut eorum comparatione alacrius donec perficiantur assurgant.*

*Quisquis autem populi terreni temporibus usque ad illuminationem interioris hominis meruit peruenire, genus humanum pro tempore adiuuit exhibens ei, quod aetas illa poscebat, et per prophetiam intimans id, quod exhibere opportunum non erat. Quales patriarchae ac prophetae inueniuntur ab eis, qui non pueriliter insiliunt, sed pie diligenterque pertractant diuinarum et humanarum rerum tam bonum et tam grande secretum. CCL 32. 219-220. The refinement of the description of the seven ages of biblical history in *Gn. a. Man.* (1.23) is clear (cf. ch. 4, p. 164-169). See also *uera rel.* 26.49 for the seven ages of individual spiritual growth.*

²⁷¹ *terrena ciuitate. CCL 32. 218.*

underline his understanding of the church in terms of God's temporal dispensations. For example, he fastened onto the idea of the angels as the archetypes for the fate and progress of humans.²⁷² Another significant ecclesiological concept, which had appeared previously in his writings but was employed in 390/391 in connection with the church in the world and history, was that of the wheat and the tares.²⁷³ This concept had now been thought through,²⁷⁴ and Augustine now employed it naturally in support of his overall temporal ecclesiological understanding.²⁷⁵ The idea of the 'church' as present throughout history supported Augustine's other concepts of its nature. It was able to reach and hold all the faithful by merit not only of its geographical extent but also because conceptually it could house the wheat (even those without its visible congregation, *cf. uera rel.* 6.11) and contain without fundamental damage those who in the end will be revealed as tares or chaff. This reinforced the church's truth and authority and justified its work as it mediated salvation and enabled the spiritual progress of all in its unified community. Such an idea provides an excellent example of Augustine's ecclesial synthesis. The 'historic' element of Augustine's ecclesiological synthesis included a detailed understanding both of the concept of God's temporal dispensation and of the history of the specifically Christian tradition and testaments. Thus, ecclesiological strands can be drawn out from Augustine's overall religious synthesis of 390. However, since these are interwoven, it is impossible to separate his thought on the church from his general understanding of the Christian religion (*e.g.* of sin and spiritual separation from God, requiring the individual ascent to God).

ECCLESIOLOGY IN PRACTICE

It would be an inaccurate reflection of Augustine's view of the church to separate his understanding of life from his practical undertakings. Thus, this final section presents

²⁷² *uera rel.* 13.26 and 55.110.

²⁷³ *cf.* ch. 4, n. 187 (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.3.4: where the use of Mt. 13.38 implies the 'field of world' is full of the spiritual and the carnal); n. 185 (*mor. ecc.* 34.76: where it is said that those in the church who persist in evil will be separated out as tares, or as Christians, chaff); *cf.* ch. 4 n. 184. In these earlier references, the statements are simply made; moreover, the emphasis is on the moral distinction or the distinction in ability to comprehend spiritual reality.

²⁷⁴ the principal refinements in 390 in *uera rel.* are: 1. Augustine's understanding of the wheat and chaff/tares in terms of process and not simply as clear demarcations (*cf. uera rel.* 6.10: which describes carnal Christians on God's threshing floor. They may stay there until separated from their chaff covering by repentance and spiritual belief/life, or by the judgment, or by leaving to join or form schisms or heresies); 2. the specific association of the chaff/tares with schismatics (*cf. uera rel.* 5.9, and to a lesser extent with heretics, *cf.* 6.10); 3. and in his giving reasons for the mixed nature of the wheat and the tares (*e.g. uera rel.* 27.50: which speaks of the mixed status of humanity and the church, *i.e.* the 'impious with pious' and gives as an explanation that this provides a stimulus to choose the right path of life).

²⁷⁵ *uera rel.* 5.9; 6.10; 27.50.

the evidence of Augustine's own ecclesial practice during 390-391, and how it related to the conceptual scheme discussed above which crystallized during that same time. The primary areas of consideration are the ascetic or 'monastic' status in 390 or early 391 of Augustine and his community at Thagaste and his position as a Catholic teacher.²⁷⁶

Unfortunately, at times, Augustine has been viewed too much as a passive recipient and not enough as an initiator in his formative early Christian period. He had a strong idea of the general principles of the life he should follow as one attached to the authority of Christ, seeking understanding in so much as this is possible by reason. Hence, the community he initiated at Thagaste did not copy exclusively any one contemporary model. Various ascetic and 'monastic' groups had influenced Augustine by the time he arrived at Thagaste in 388. He had consciously incorporated many of their ideas or practices into his own ideal of the individual and corporate religious life. Yet, he did not 'found' the community at Thagaste as a 'monastery'. He simply settled, with a number of friends and dependents, in a unique Christian community which appears no further removed from the more common ideal of philosophic retirement than from that of a 'monastery'. It is not helpful to confine the community to either of the 'philosophic' and 'monastic' labels. Indeed, the unique combination of activities in the community reflect Augustine's influential position and his ability to absorb influences into his own unique personal synthesis. Thagaste was certainly different from earlier communal endeavors such as at Cassiciacum since the community at the Italian villa was participating in the ideal of philosophic retirement as Christians; whereas at Thagaste, the community was participating in the fulfillment of the life of service to God which included aspects derived from both the older philosophic and the newer Christian ascetic ideals. Moreover, since the community was not rigidly defined, it progressed in its Christian focus and practice over the period 388-390.²⁷⁷ As discussed above, during this time the idea of the universal Christian communion as ascetic and the integrated conception of the ascetic life as the means of spiritual devotion to God both eventually crystallized for Augustine. *On True Religion* articulates a first synthesis of his Christian understanding and the preceding discussion has illuminated the coalescence of Augustine's ideas about the church in this work. One question which arises from this is whether this conceptual development was mirrored by a coalescing of Augustine's role in the Thagaste community, or in a concretization of the

²⁷⁶ for further discussion, see ch. 4, p. 172f. and also comments by A. Zumkeller, *Augustine's ... Religious Life* (1986), esp. 24-32; G.P. Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), esp. 45-58; and R.J. Halliburton, 'The Inclination to Retirement – the Retreat of Cassiciacum and the "Monastery" of Tagaste', *SP* 5 (1962), 329-340.

²⁷⁷ see ch. 4, p. 172f. for examples of this progression.

structures of the community itself. Specifically, had the community developed into a 'monastery' by the time of Augustine's trip to Hippo; and if so, how and for what reasons?

Augustine felt competent, in writing *On True Religion*, to assume the position of a teacher of the Catholic religion. This was the culmination of his earlier ideal of teacher or learned one in the church and his earlier adoption of the role of Catholic defender and expositor. In fact, it seems that, besides his role as a teacher as witnessed in 83 *Questions* and in his other writings, by 391, he had personal experience in interacting with a number of 'critics and seekers' of the Catholic faith.²⁷⁸ He spoke in *On True Religion* chapter 8.15 of the fact that 'there are innumerable men in the holy church approved by God' who ought to be seeking understanding and passing it on to their brothers and sisters in the church.²⁷⁹ Undoubtedly, Augustine wanted to be one of the 'various types of people' whom 'Divine providence employs ... as examples for the treatment of souls and for the establishment/instruction of a spiritual people' (*uera rel.* 6.11).²⁸⁰ He had begun to act as a leader and teacher in his community in a way which was increasingly similar to those in official positions in the Catholic church or the ascetic communities and 'monasteries' of which he was aware.²⁸¹ He was a part, as he had come to think all spiritual Christians should be, of the propagation of true religion and the spiritual life.

Augustine was confident that the Christian life, regardless of where one lived, was to be ascetic. Regular study of scripture and prayer were important elements of life at Thagaste, and the practice of holding property and possessions in common was enjoyed.²⁸² Still, in 390, the evidence does not allow definite conclusions about the nature of the Thagaste community, or the practice of daily life there. Augustine's writings from 390 and early 391 are general in their comments, allowing identification of general principles and conceptions but do not contain much detailed description of practices. As seen in *On Music* and *On True Religion*, Augustine clearly had thought through and committed himself to the ascetic life. Unfortunately, however, virtually no

²⁷⁸ *uera rel.* 10.20: *Ego itaque diu multumque considerans, quales oblatrantes et quales quaerentes expertus sim uel qualis ipse siue cum latrarem siue cum quaererem ...* CCL 32. 200 (though in what context is quite unclear).

²⁷⁹ *Sunt enim innumerabiles in sancta ecclesia deo probati uiri, sed manifesti non fiunt inter nos, quamdiu imperitiae nostrae tenebris delectati dormire malumus, quam lucem ueritatis intueri.* CCL 32. 197.

²⁸⁰ *Ita omnibus generibus hominum et exemplorum ad animarum curationem et ad institutionem spiritalis populi utitur diuina prouidentia.* CCL 32. 195.

²⁸¹ cf. ch. 3, p. 116 and ch. 4, p. 140-142, 147, 152-153, 179.

²⁸² cf. *uita Aug.* 3; see *Gn. a Man.* and other examples of scriptural study/commentary at Thagaste, cf. ch. 4, n. 138 and p. 159f. (cf. *mor. ecc.* 33.71; *mag.* 5.14; *mor. Man.* 14.32). For prayer see ch. 4, n. 138 and *ep.* 21.4.

specific comments about the Thagaste *community* or Augustine's routine of life can be ascertained in these same two works.

The most specific evidence concerning the institutional nature of the Thagaste community and Augustine's attitude toward institution is found in later comments referring to his 'visit' to Hippo in 391. Years later in *sermon* 355 to his congregation at Hippo, Augustine briefly explained his arrival in 391.

I, whom by the grace of God you see as your bishop, came as a young man to this city, as many of you know. I was seeking [a place] where I should establish a monastery and live with my brothers. To be sure I had [already] abandoned all hope in the world. What I was able to be I did not wish to be, nor did I seek even to be what I now am. 'I chose to be lowly in the house of my God, more than to live in the tents of sinners' [Ps. 83.11]. I separated myself from those who love the world, but with those who presided over the peoples, I did not equate myself. ... During that time, I used to fear the episcopacy so much, that since my reputation already had begun to be of some importance among the servants of God, I would not enter those places where I knew there was no bishop. I used to guard thus and I did as much as I could, that I should be safer in a humble place and not in a more dangerous, high position. But, as I said, a servant ought not to contradict the master. I came to this city on account of seeing a friend, whom I thought I could win for God, so that he should be with us in a monastery; I came like one secure since this place had a bishop. I was seized, I was made presbyter, and through that step I then became bishop (s. 355.2).²⁸³

Thus, Augustine said that he came to Hippo looking for a place to found a monastery. Yet, this could have been either as an extension to one already existing at Thagaste or, probably, for the first time as a distinct next stage on from the Christian religious/philosophic community at Thagaste. Perhaps the determination to found a monastery somewhere else had already been made in Augustine's mind, and the call of this 'friend' at Hippo provided an opportunity to explore a possible location for a new monastic community.²⁸⁴ Folliet has followed Augustine's discussion at this point closely.²⁸⁵ He notes Augustine's reference to 'looking' for a place for a monastery, and that Augustine came to recruit a friend for a monastery. 'But what monastery?',

²⁸³ *Ego, quem Deo propitio uidetis episcopum uestrum, iuuenis ueni ad istam ciuitatem, ut multi uestrum nouerunt. Quaerebam ubi constituerem monasterium, et uiuerem cum fratribus meis. Spem quippe omnem saeculi reliqueram, et quod esse potui, esse nolui: nec tamen quaesiui esse quod sum. 'Elegi in domo Dei mei abiectus esse, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum' (Ps. 83.11). Ab eis qui diligunt saeculum, segregauit me: sed eis qui praesunt populis, non me coaequaui. Nec in conuiuio Domini mei superiorem locum elegi, sed inferiorem et abiectum: et placuit illi dicere mihi, Ascende sursum. Usque adeo autem timebam episcopatum, ut quoniam coeperat esse iam alicuius momenti inter Dei seruos fama mea, in quo loco sciebam non esse episcopum, non illo accederem. Cauebam hoc, et agebam quantum poteram, ut in loco humili saluarer, ne in alto periclitarer. Sed, ut dixi, domino seruus contradicere non debet. Ueni ad istam ciuitatem propter uidendum amicum, quem putabam me lucrari posse Deo, ut nobiscum esset in monasterio; quasi securus, quia locus habebat episcopum. Apprehensus, presbyter factus sum, et per hunc gradum perueni ad episcopatum. PL 39. 1569.*

²⁸⁴ it is even possible, though unlikely, that Augustine came to recruit his 'friend' for a monastery which had by now emerged and been recognized at Thagaste, happening upon the idea of founding a monastery at Hippo only after his conscription and confusing the order in the re-telling.

²⁸⁵ G. Folliet, 'Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 41-43 and esp. n. 69 (see also p. 38-43 of his discussion).

Folliet asks. Since the primary references to a monastery in the text are surely to the one at Hippo, only the statement from the sermon, 'so that he should be with us in a monastery', is open to question. On this Folliet states, 'Une telle interprétation ne me paraît guère possible. Le monastère auquel Augustin espère amener une recrue de choix ne peut être que celui dont il parlait quelques lignes plus haut, c'est-à-dire celui qu'il cherchait à fonder'.²⁸⁶ For Folliet, Augustine's foundation of a monastery was a new endeavor and was one he was seeking to enact at the appropriate place. He was close enough to such foundation to seek a recruit for it even though the place had not yet been determined. Hippo, by course of events, afforded the place.

Augustine's record in *sermon* 355 of the trip to and events at Hippo is not the only one. Possidius also described these happenings of early 391 in his *uita Aug.* Having described Augustine's return to Africa and commencement of life in Christian community at Thagaste, Possidius wrote:

Now it came about at this time that a certain one of those whom they call 'agents in affairs' who lived at Hippo Regius, a good Christian fearing God, having found out about [Augustine's] good fame and learning, asked and wished to see him; promising that he was able to condemn all the lusts and allurements of this world if only he were granted to hear the word of God from [Augustine's] mouth. When this had been relayed to [Augustine] by faithful report, desiring that soul to be free from perils of this life and from eternal death, he went to that city voluntarily and immediately. And having met the man he spoke to him frequently and exhorted him that just as God had given to him, so he should give back to God what he had vowed. Day after day the man promised to do this, but did not fulfill this while Augustine was present.

And at that time the holy Valerius was bishop in the Catholic church at Hippo. Who, with the pressure of ecclesiastical necessities, spoke to and exhorted the people to provide and ordain a presbyter for the city. The Catholics, already knowing of the resolution and learning of the holy Augustine, laid hands on him (... for while a layman he was accustomed, as he told us, to withhold his presence from such churches as did not have bishops) ... and, as is customary in such cases, brought him to the bishop for ordination ... [but Augustine] wept at length ... as he understood how many and how great were the perils which threatened his life from the direction and government of the church ... (*uita Aug.* 3-4).²⁸⁷

Possidius continued in the next chapter,

²⁸⁶ G. Folliet, 'Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 42 n. 69.

²⁸⁷ *Contigit forte eodem tempore, ut quidam ex his, quos dicunt agentes in rebus, apud Hipponem-regium constitutus, bene Christianus Deumque timens, comperta eius bona fama atque doctrina, desideraret atque optaret eum uidere, promittens se posse mundi huius omnes contemnere cupiditates atque illecebras, si aliquando ex eius ore Dei uerbum audire meruisset. Quod cum ad se fideli fuisset relatione delatum, liberari animam cupiens ab huius uitae periculis morteque aeterna, ad memoratam ultro atque confestim uenit ciuitatem, et hominem uisum allocutus frequentius atque exhortatus est, quantum Deus donabat, ut quod Deo uouerat reddidisset. Ac se ille de die in diem facturum pollicebatur, nec tamen in eius tunc hoc impleuit praesentia. ...*

Eodem itaque tempore in ecclesia Hipponensi Catholica Valerius sanctus episcopatum gerebat. Qui cum flagitante ecclesiastica necessitate, de prouidendo et ordinando presbytero ciuitati plebem Dei alloqueretur et exhortaretur, iam scientes Catholici sancti Augustini propositum et doctrinam, manu iniecta (... solebat autem laicus, ut nobis dicebat, ab eis tantum ecclesiis, quae non haberent episcopos, suam abstinere praesentiam); ... et, ut in talibus consuetum est, episcopo ordinandum intulerunt ... ubertim eo flente ... cum ille homo Dei, ut nobis retulit, maiori consideratione intelligeret et gemeret, quam multa et magna suae uitae pericula de regimine et gubernatione ecclesiae impendere iam ac prouenire speraret, atque ideo fleret. H.T. Weiskotten (1919), 44-48.

Having been made presbyter [Augustine] then instituted a monastery within the church and began to live with the servants of God according to the manner and rule [of life] constituted under the holy Apostles. Above all, in that community, no one should have any personal things, but all things should [be held] in common, and it should be distributed to each just as there was need [cf. Acts 4.32-35], which he had already done previously [*i.e.* lived in this manner], when he had come from across the sea to his own property (*uita Aug.* 5).²⁸⁸

Unfortunately, Possidius' comments on the trip do not add much insight to the picture. His account fleshes out the invitation and motive for going to Hippo. It also confirms Augustine's practice of avoiding vacant sees and that his reputation in 391 preceded him. Finally, it confirms the 'institution' of the monastery at Hippo only after Augustine's clerical conscription. Yet ultimately, no greater understanding is provided into Augustine's ascetic status upon arrival in Hippo or the status of the community in Thagaste other than the observation that Augustine was continuing a manner of life already begun at Thagaste in his new community at Hippo.

Certain elements of the Hippo event are clear, however, from the comments of Possidius and Augustine. Principally, Augustine had decided upon the establishment of a monastic community as the way in which he was going to proceed in his pursuit of true religion. Such a decision was completely congruent with his ecclesial thought in late 390/early 391.²⁸⁹ The synthesis which Augustine had reached concerning the Catholic religion and the way in which it was to be lived most likely led to a resultant sense of direction and purpose which he began to act upon. Two years earlier Augustine could not be bothered to take the trip away from Thagaste to visit even so close a friend as Nebridius.²⁹⁰ But in 391, he decided to visit Hippo in response to a nameless Christian official who was not even fully convinced that he wanted to join Augustine's way of life. The community at Thagaste had not been founded as a 'monastery'. Yet, if it had not been officially identified as a 'monastery' by early in 391, at least by that time, Augustine thought that such a course was desirable either at Thagaste or somewhere else.²⁹¹ One possible explanation of Augustine's account of

²⁸⁸ *Factusque presbyter monasterium intra ecclesiam mox instituit, et cum Dei seruis uiuere coepit secundum modum et regulam sub sanctis apostolis constitutam. Maxime ut nemo quidquam proprium in illa societate haberet, sed eis essent omnia communia, et distribuerentur unicuique sicut opus erat, quod iam ipse prior fecerat, dum de transmarinis ad sua remeasset.* H.T. Weiskotten (1919), 48.

²⁸⁹ esp. with his understanding of: the Christian communion as ascetic; the value of explicit connection to the organized church and its structures which propagated true religion; and his personal activity as a teacher in the Christian communion yet a spiritual Catholic in service to God in the ascetic religious life (cf. also n. 113).

²⁹⁰ *ep.* 10.1; cf. ch. 4, p. 154-155 (esp. n. 143-144).

²⁹¹ it is possible that Augustine's conclusions about moving in a monastic direction were not shared by all the members of the Thagaste community (or were not yet). Might not some of them have been more similar in their commitment as *serui dei* to Nebridius, for example, than to Augustine? (cf. ch. 4, p. 178 esp. n. 255; see also ch. 4 n. 230, 231, and 234). It is difficult to say what 'official' founding of a monastery would have meant. Presumably the blessing of the local bishop may have been expected. It seems probable that some sort of public declaration or acknowledgment of and

his journey to Hippo in *sermon* 355.2 is that he had not made up his mind whether to establish the Thagaste community as a monastery or whether, since that community did not provide immediate opportunity for such a transition, to search for another place.²⁹² An equally valid possibility is that he was looking for a place other than Thagaste to initiate his monastic ideal but was constrained in this, on the one hand, by the limitations on his travel given the present danger of episcopal conscription, and on the other hand, by the natural tension of needing to reform, move, or leave the Thagaste community. What is clear is that in 391 Augustine was determined to pursue the establishment of a monastery and that he was already acting on this intention by coming to Hippo.²⁹³ Thus, Augustine had reached a critical juncture in terms of his personal leadership and responsibility to others. In communal terms, however, it is not possible to say whether the trip to Hippo reflects a concretization of ascetics structures at Thagaste.

SYNTHESIS LEADING TO RESOLVED ACTION

The conclusion that Augustine had achieved a monastic ecclesial synthesis at Thagaste not only flows from the evidence of 390 and early 391 but also affords the best interpretive model for understanding Augustine's actions immediately before and after his forced entry into the priesthood in Hippo. The decision to set up a monastery is the most obvious case in point. This was a confident action based upon a coherent Christian and ecclesial understanding. The crystallization of Augustine's understanding of Christian religion seen in *On Music* and *On True Religion* translated into a confident focusing of his ecclesiastical and vocational direction. This clear direction is in contrast to the picture of Augustine as directionless at the end of 390 presented, for example, by Peter Brown. He states,

Much had changed in the past three years. When Augustine arrived in Hippo, in the spring of 391, he was a lonely man, entering middle age, who had lost much of his past and who was groping, half-consciously, for new fields to conquer.²⁹⁴

Augustine's community at Thagaste had undergone at least one change in composition with the death of Adeodatus (c. 389). This loss, as well as the deaths of Augustine's mother, before the return to Africa, and of Nebridius, sometime before 391, may have

affiliation to the church hierarchy would have been entailed. The real question was whether a community was understood to be so identified by the people within and without.

²⁹² one senses that Augustine would not have wanted to force an establishment, preferring voluntary participation.

²⁹³ cf. G. Folliet, 'Aux origines de l'ascétisme et du cénobitisme africain', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961), 42 n. 69; and discussion above.

²⁹⁴ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 137.

focused Augustine's attention on the responsibilities which he had to the broader Christian community.²⁹⁵ Thus, Augustine may have been galvanized by his personal losses, but he certainly did not come to Hippo out of disillusionment or despair. Rather, he came out of conviction, understanding, and responsibility. Augustine was convinced that the monastic context was the proper one in which he should live in service to God. It satisfied his personality and desires (especially for teaching, study, *otium*, etc.), and his background and beliefs about the religious life. Furthermore, as a participant or even leader of a monastic community he would not have to face the temptations and busyness of a clerical church leader. A monastery allowed a place which conformed with his understanding of the universal church and its local manifestations. In it he could honor his devotion to God in the spiritual life *and* display his love for others in the Christian communion (and beyond) as he fulfilled his responsibilities as an intellectual spiritual Catholic. The emergence of an ecclesial synthesis in 390 was probably the most significant aspect underlying these considerations. It provided a basis, in understanding, for action. Moreover, it had supplied Augustine with the models and influences which he had absorbed to reach this point of action. In the church, Augustine found a position in a universal communion of charity, of shared direction and responsibility, leading to God. In this communion, the Catholic church, the 'service of God' was fulfilled and, by 391, Augustine understood how for him to be visibly 'in' the church was best satisfied in a monastery.

As *sermon* 355 makes clear, Augustine's plan in coming to Hippo did not materialize. He came with clear direction, but by merit of his surprise consecration, this was thwarted. This was a traumatic turn of events, and Augustine could not control his tears at the time.²⁹⁶ As much as he knew he wanted to pursue a clear monastic direction, Augustine equally knew that he did not want to pursue a clerical vocation.²⁹⁷ Still, even in these circumstances the model of synthesis leading to resolved action represented above yields the best interpretation of subsequent events. Specifically, it provides an explanation of the requests made in *letter* 21 to bishop

²⁹⁵ there is no doubt that these losses had an effect. G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 534.

²⁹⁶ s. 355. 1-2; cf. *ep.* 21.

²⁹⁷ G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 111, comments: 'In Augustine's case, there is no doubt that his desire to avoid ordination was perfectly genuine. He had found his vocation in the religious life. He wished to be a monk, not a minister. Three years at Thagaste had taught him much about the cloister; he felt that need to organize his community in a more regular fashion, in a new locality with an established rule [referring to s. 355.1.2]. But that was all; and in order to avoid being consecrated against his will, he carefully avoided churches which he knew, at any time, to be without a bishop'.

Valerius concerning Augustine's supposed need to read up on the scriptures in order to be able to carry out his role as a cleric.²⁹⁸ Augustine wrote to the bishop, saying,

nothing in this life, and even more so in this time, is more difficult, laborious, or perilous than the office of bishop, presbyter, or deacon. But nothing is more blessed in God's view, if that manner of service is offered which our commander [*i.e.* Christ] orders ...

But I think that my Lord wished to correct me on account of this, that I dared to censure the faults of many sailors, like one better and more learned, before I had come to know by experience what it was to work thus. And so after I had been sent into their midst, then I began to understand the audacity of my censures (although even previously I had judged this vocation most perilous) ... However, I came to know [the perils] by experience much, so much, more than I reckoned, not because I have seen any new waves or tempests which before I had not seen or heard of or read about or thought of, but because I did not really know my skill and strength to avoid or endure [them], and considered it to be of some weight. But the Lord mocked me and desired to show me my [true] self.

Which he did, not for condemnation, but for pity's sake (for I certainly hope that now my weaknesses have been recognized), so I ought to search through all the medicines of the scriptures and to pursue prayer and study such that sufficient strength may be granted to my soul for such perilous ministry. This I did not do before because I did not have time; for I was ordained at the time when we were considering some free time for careful examination of the divine scriptures and so we wished to arrange it, that we might have some otium for this task. ...

But perhaps your holiness says: 'I want to know what your instruction lacks'. Yet the deficiencies are so many that I can more easily enumerate what I have than what I want to have. For I dare to say that I know and hold fast in faith what pertains to our salvation. But by what method ought I to minister this same for the salvation of others 'not seeking what profits me but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved' [1 Cor. 10.33]? Perhaps there are some, no rather it is undoubted that there are counsels written in the holy books, by which, having understood and grasped them, the man of God is able to minister the regular ecclesiastical duties, or at least either to live with healthy conscience amidst the hands of the wicked, or to die, so that the life should not be lost for which alone Christian hearts long with humility and tranquillity. But how is this possible, unless as the Lord himself says, by asking, seeking, and knocking [Mt. 7.7-8; Lk. 9.9-10], that is by prayer, study, and beating the breast. For this task I wished through [my] brothers to obtain from your most sincere and venerable charity a little time for myself, perhaps up until the Pascha, and now I wish through this entreaty (*ep.* 21.1, 2, 3, 4).²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ see *ep.* 21.2-4.

²⁹⁹ *item nihil esse in hac uita et maxime hoc tempore difficilium, laboriosius, periculosius episcopi aut presbyteri aut diaconi officio, sed apud deum nihil beatius, si eo modo militetur, quo noster imperator iubet. ...*

Sed arbitror dominum meum propterea me sic emendare uoluisse, quod multorum peccata nautarum, antequam expertus essem, quid illic agitur, quasi doctior et melior reprehendere audebam. itaque posteaquam missus sum in medium, tunc sentire coepi temeritates reprehensionum mearum, quamquam et antea periculosissimum iudicarem hoc ministerium. ... sed multo, ualde multo amplius expertus sum, quam putabam, non quia nouos aliquos fluctus aut tempestates uidi, quas ante non uideram uel non audieram uel non legeram uel non cogitaueram, sed ad eas euitandas aut perferendas sollertiam et uires meas omnino non noueram et alicuius momenti arbitrabar. dominus autem inrisit me et rebus ipsis ostendere uoluit me ipsum mihi.

Quod si non damnando, sed miserando fecit – hoc enim spero certe uel nunc cognita aegritudine mea, – debeo scripturarum eius medicamenta omnia perscrutari et orando ac legendo agere, ut idonea ualitudo animae meae ad tam periculosa negotia tribuatur. quod ante non feci, quia et tempus non habui; tunc enim ordinatus sum, cum de ipso uacationis tempore ad cognoscendas diuinas scripturas cogitarem et sic nos disponere uellemus, ut nobis otium ad hoc negotium posset esse. ...

Sed dicit fortasse sanctitas tua: uellem scire, quid desit instructioni tuae. tam multa autem sunt, ut facilius possim enumerare, quae habeam, quam quae habere desidero. auderem enim dicere scire me et plena fide retinere, quid pertineat ad salutem nostram. sed hoc ipsum quo modo ministrem ad salutem aliorum 'non quaerens, quod mihi utile est, sed quod multis, ut salui fiant'? Et sunt fortasse aliqua, immo non est dubitandum esse in sanctis libris conscripta consilia, quibus cognitis et adprehensis possit homo dei rebus ecclesiasticis ordinatoribus ministrare aut certe inter manus iniquorum uel uiuere conscientia saniore uel mori, ut illa uita non amittatur, cui uni christiana corda humilia et

In early 391, Augustine already felt himself competent to undertake the role of Catholic teacher. However, he was avoiding sees without bishops to escape conscription and thus had thought about why he did not want to adopt such a position. By his own account his reputation was considerable enough to warrant his position as a bishop.³⁰⁰ In fact, Augustine had consciously decided against pursuing an office in the church primarily because of the responsibility for the large numbers of carnal persons which burdened such a position.³⁰¹ Thus his former study of scripture and Christian meditation had not been oriented, ecclesiologically, this way.³⁰² For someone with Augustine's obvious familiarity with scripture,³⁰³ conscription into the clergy would not prompt the kind of request made to Valerius unless there was already knowledge of some very significant lack which required study. If Augustine had achieved an ecclesiological synthesis (as well as a personal preference and vocational motivation) which now could not be pursued as he thought best, and so had to be re-evaluated, then such a *lacuna* would be identified.

Clerical ministry did not provide peace, it held out the temptation of pride and necessitated frequent involvement with the carnal members of the Catholic church. These things Augustine did not desire or feel ready for³⁰⁴ or feel would allow him to live out the spiritual life. Yet, he was bound to the responsibility of charity in the church (e.g. it was not an option to refuse his forced consecration). He was visibly shaken at being forced into this vocation, but his convictions demanded a response that continued progress in the spiritual life. Augustine's conscription into a clerical position at Hippo fundamentally altered his vocational direction, but it did not disturb his basic ecclesial understanding or render his monastic commitment void. Because of the responsibility of charity, a combination of the clerical and monastic vocation was now

mansueta suspirant. quo modo autem hoc fieri potest, nisi, quem ad modum ipse dominus dicit, petendo quaerendo pulsando, id est orando legendo plangendo? ad quod negotium mihi paruum tempus uelut usque ad pascha impetrare uolui per fratres a tua sincerissima et uenerabili caritate et nunc per has preces uolo. CSEL 34.2.1. 49-52; cf. the same text with facing English translation in J.H. Baxter, *St. Augustine. Selected Letters, LCL* (1930), 32-36.

³⁰⁰ s. 355.2.

³⁰¹ as discussed above, this aspect, which Augustine felt would hinder his life of service before God, combined with a real sense of humility and a desire to retain an element of free *otium* in his life.

³⁰² e.g., his writings of 390/early 391 give no real attention to the tasks of clerical office, though Augustine was certainly aware of them. His focus was on a life removed from the world and the carnal not on ministry in the world or among the carnal.

³⁰³ understandably not at the high level of competence to which he would have aspired but quite impressive for a five year old believer. The only biblical books not yet evidenced in Augustine's writings by the time he went to Hippo, were: Numbers, Joshua, Ruth, 2 Samuel, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Esther, Lamentations, Baruch, Obadiah, Jonah, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi, from the Old Testament; and Philemon, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude from the New Testament (cf. Appendix C).

³⁰⁴ ep. 21 *passim*.

required. Therefore, Augustine had to respond to the dangers he had feared, yet preserve his monastic ideal as best he could.³⁰⁵ A monastery still offered the opportunity of the rarefied atmosphere of religious devotion and spiritual contemplation on God and his truth. It offered the peaceful life separated from the tumult of the world, yet it contained clear structures and identity as part of the church. Indeed, the monastic life modeled an ideal for all Christians³⁰⁶ and retained visible involvement in the Christian communion. With all these convictions, Augustine came to Hippo in 391, not in a depressed state of mid-life crisis,³⁰⁷ but as a confident action based on his recent conclusions about the Catholic religion and church. This step, his actions despite clerical conscription, and his writings in 390 and early 391 preceding the journey to Hippo all demonstrate that Augustine had achieved a first, monastic ecclesiological synthesis.

³⁰⁵ this may be the basis of the unique type of clerical monastery which developed at Hippo under Augustine.

³⁰⁶ C.W. Brockwell, 'Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community', *Aug. Stud.* 8 (1977), 107.

³⁰⁷ which is painted by P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1968), 137.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

By late 390, Augustine's ideas of the church had emerged to form a synthesis. While not presented in systematic form, this synthesis does represent a coherent ecclesial understanding. This can be identified in three parts. Augustine had achieved ecclesiological understandings of the church both in the world and in history. These conceptions place the church in God's plan and work on earth and they include ideas of the church's activity, position, and constitution. Moreover, these two conceptions emerged from Augustine's personal spiritual life before God and they provided a framework for his life and actions in the broader Christian communion and indeed the world. Thus, the third identifiable element of synthesis is Augustine's position in and activity in relation to the church. His early ecclesiology emerged not as separate theology and practice, but as a combination of understanding and practice of life.

In this conclusion, principal areas of ecclesial emergence are presented in an integrated restatement. The first section identifies and details the emergence and development of basic ecclesial aspects over the course of 386-391.¹ The second identifies and discusses the emergence of Augustine's first ecclesiological synthesis, that is, specifically how the elements which emerged in this period came together in his first coherent or comprehensive understanding of the church. Both of these areas of emergence were analyzed closely in the chapters above in terms of Augustine's overall spiritual development during the period; and hence, this conclusion presents them in independent form, in summary, and in their context to show the whole development.

The Emergence and Development of Basic Ecclesial Aspects

Augustine's first clear ecclesial action was his request for and reception of Catholic baptism in the spring of 387. While there is no doubt that Augustine had been converted to Catholic Christianity in the summer of 386, that conversion (and the

¹ noting both those elements which appear in the synthesis of 390/391 and those which do not.

process behind it) as recorded in the *Confessions* and *Dialogues* was primarily a personal affair. No conceptions of the church are discernible in his Christian development until baptism. This lack of ecclesial thought or attention is also manifest in the period immediately following the conversion, at Cassiciacum. An analysis of the writings from Cassiciacum reveals that the primary focus at the villa was the personal pursuit of the comprehension of God and the soul, the pursuit of 'true philosophy' within an intimate community. No reference to the church was made at this time; and, even though the intention for baptism became clear at Cassiciacum, in light of the evidence of Augustine's Christian philosophic life and thought at the villa, this intention was probably not indicative of a need or desire for ongoing ecclesial activity. Nor was this intention part of any clear understanding of the church. Rather, baptism was most directly necessary to receive the cleansing authority of Christ that represented the basis of Augustine's new Christian philosophic life.² Thus, the ecclesial significance of the decision for baptism at Milan is tempered. Nevertheless, in the actual participation in and reception of baptism, Augustine made an ecclesiastical commitment and indicated at least some need and willingness to be identified with the general Catholic communion.

Although his first ecclesial action was the reception of baptism, the first clear evidence of ecclesial interest or window into Augustine's ecclesial ideas emerges from Rome. In the writings from there of 387 and then early 388, the emergence and development of Augustine's basic early ideas of the church are seen. Both *The Greatness of the Soul* and *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* reveal conceptions of the church as teacher, mother, and Catholic. While these ideas of the church become frequent in the writings, they are not objects of attention themselves, but instead appear in the course of Augustine's descriptions and arguments as support or in explanations. Essentially, these ideas represent early views of the church, not considered or examined positions on its nature or its activity. The connection of the 'church' with 'teachers' or 'teaching' was the dominant ecclesial connection in this period. By this time, Augustine had specifically identified the Christian beliefs (especially as expressed in scripture) to which he had assented and committed as the teachings of the church. Also during this time, he praised the church for the great scope of its communion and for its instruction (*mor. ecc.* 30.62-64). Moreover, he admired the 'great and learned teachers of the church' who grasped and could explain these beliefs spiritually. Augustine's first actions explicitly as a part of the Catholic communion and on behalf of the church also appear at Rome, namely, the writing of his earliest polemical works against Manichaeism. In *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, Augustine was

² *i.e.* Augustine appears basically motivated towards baptism as: 1. a means of receiving cleansing authority, and 2. an expression of commitment.

concerned to defend Catholic teaching and especially scriptures against Manichee criticisms as well as to affirm and defend the ascetic reputation of the Catholic church. He seems to have emulated the teachers of the church which he admired; and, in his writing, Augustine was clearly operating at some level for the church. Still, no clear recognized role or involvement in the institutional church can be discerned from these writings. Therefore, Augustine remained in 'the shadow of the church',³ in clear allegiance but also clear aloofness from its institutions and the general Catholic communion (and probably local congregations).

The sudden emergence and increase in the ideas and actions relative to the church in the period between Milan and Thagaste (principally at Rome) suggest the possibility, however, that Rome itself actually was not the starting point of Augustine's thought about the church. The shift from no mention of and minimal interest in the church, at Cassiciacum, to activities for and frequent mention of the 'church', at Rome, implies that Milan might actually have been the starting point of Augustine's ecclesial thoughts and actions, just as it marked the point of his entrance into the church. By reconsidering the events and input at Milan as well as the possible sources of motivation which Augustine may have recalled as he went through the baptismal process, it appears that in fact he would have been first stimulated to think about the church at Milan. It was primarily because of the ecclesial nature of the baptismal experience, especially under the instruction and preaching of Ambrose, that he would have first encountered and probably comprehended the importance of the church in the overall salvific plan of God, his place in a spiritual communion devoted to God, and the church as the teacher of God's truth on earth and the 'mother' of all true Christians. In any case, he certainly experienced an ecclesially charged context at Milan in the preparation, rites, instruction, and expositions of the baptismal process; and he also certainly heard statements and discussions about the church from Ambrose.

Following his return to North Africa and his hometown of Thagaste in 388, other points of ecclesial emergence are seen from the ecclesial ferment at Rome. For example, most noticeably in the early writings at Thagaste, Augustine's actions in the role of teacher/defender of the church reflect new subtlety and sensitivity. Furthermore, new elements such as ecclesial exegesis, first theological conceptions of the church, and first clear ascetic interest emerged at Thagaste as well. Perhaps the most significant ecclesial development in the early Thagaste years was the emergence of Augustine's ecclesial exegesis. Although the scriptures are present and significant from Cassiciacum onward in Augustine's writings, they appear in citation and not in

³ to use Brown's phrase, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 132.

exegetical discussion.⁴ Augustine first discussed ecclesiological significant passages (e.g. Col. 1.18) at Thagaste. Even more importantly, he began to interpret the Genesis creation account in terms of prefiguring the future development of God's plan in history. Present in this discussion from early at Thagaste for the first time are the concepts of: the failure of the Old Testament and synagogue; the age in which Augustine lived, following Christ, as the age of Christ and the church; and the idea of the church as the body of Christ or the bride of Christ as Eve was linked to Adam. Other particularly significant ecclesial exegetical developments at Thagaste include the first discussions of the wheat and the tares in terms of spiritual and non-spiritual people throughout history. These elements of Augustine's ecclesial exegesis at Thagaste provide glimpses into his earliest theological understandings of the church at Thagaste.

Additionally, the early writings from Thagaste provide the first clear indications of Augustine's ascetic interest. Though this interest was probably stimulated in connection with the church at Rome (or even Milan), the evidence of awareness and appreciation of the ascetic aspects from these communities, or the sense of these aspects being absorbed and applied, only comes at Thagaste in 388/389. This coincides with Augustine's own foundation of a religious community at Thagaste. While it is too narrow to label this community as following in imitation of those observed and learned about in Italy, there is no doubt that the Thagaste community was influenced by and absorbed aspects of life from the ascetic communities discovered in Rome as well as from other precedents (such as the classical tradition) yielding a unique course of life.

The emergence of ascetic interest was eventually followed by Augustine's first conceptualization of the means by which the spiritual life was facilitated by the religious life. Specifically, the sixth book of *On Music* reveals Augustine's first integration of religious and spiritual life, in understanding.⁵ This understanding had implications for his communal practice and his ecclesial development in the later Thagaste period. The most obvious result of Augustine's new ascetic interest, varied practice, and theoretical relationship of such practice to the spiritual life was the first appearance in the later Thagaste years of a clear 'monastic' direction. At the end of 390, Augustine's first actions toward 'monastic' establishment reflected this direction.

Finally, the last year at Thagaste witnessed Augustine's first Christian synthesis (expressed in *On True Religion*). Within this overall understanding of the Christian religion, a first comprehensive ecclesial understanding (or ecclesiological synthesis) is identifiable. This understanding of the church is presented in coherent summary form

⁴ see Appendix C, p. 319-320.

⁵ in particular, the combination of the positive love of God and others and the aversion of the negative loves of the flesh, world, honors, and fantasies (all of pride) provided Augustine with a theoretical framework, expressed in terms of the virtues, for understanding the religious ascetic life.

below; but significantly, the elements which emerged in it for the first time included Augustine's institutional interest, appreciation, and involvement. The basic concepts of the synthesis include the first comprehensive conceptions of the universal church as: superseding all other specific rivals; universally ascetic; and spread universally in terms both of individual churches and the whole communion of believers as well as of the unified ubiquitous teaching and preaching of the church. Also, his comprehension of the church as present in some manner throughout the ages in God's temporal dispensations appeared, with appreciation of its scope for holding all those in its confines (even outside its visible boundaries), whether good or bad, until the final judgment. The result of this first ecclesiological understanding and the overall comprehensive Christian understanding, of which the synthesis was a part, led to Augustine's first actions of responsible involvement in the Catholic communion as he identified for the first time with the position of Catholic teacher and 'monastic' initiator.

Naturally, the emergence of Augustine's early ecclesiology is, in general terms, based upon the points of emergence and development noted above. Not all the elements which emerged in Augustine's conception during the period between his conversion and ordination found their way into this first coherent understanding of the church. However, a general model for the progression leading to a synthesis in 390/early 391 can be considered along the following lines. Probably the time at Milan in 387 provided the initial stimulation for Augustine to think about the church and to assign it importance. This initial stimulus was followed immediately by another period of not initial but broader stimulation, largely at Rome. Thus, it was in an ecclesially stimulated state, but without a coherent ecclesial understanding, that Augustine returned to Thagaste. The settling in community at Thagaste was much more than physical. Conceptually, it also saw the precipitation of certain ideas and fuller understanding of ideas stimulated in Italy, among them Augustine's earliest conceptions and actions relative to the church. Finally, the coalescence of ecclesial understandings in the later Thagaste period (and the actions which they led to) can be understood as the crystallization of the elements which had precipitated at Thagaste earlier.

Such an outline of progress remains simply a model of interpretation. Moreover, the final synthesis referred to above is not evidenced by systematic statements on the church by Augustine at the end of this period. Rather, within what is a clear synthesis in his understanding of the Christian religion, a series of conceptions of the church are identified which when drawn out from his overarching Christian perspective fit together in a coherent and comprehensive way. It has not been argued that this ecclesial synthesis (as drawn out and linked) was necessarily present in conscious form to Augustine nor that this aspect of his overall Christian religious synthesis was a

dominant one. Both of these statements may be true, or at least probable in light of Augustine's actions at the end of the Thagaste period.⁶ However, the coherence of the ecclesiology of early 391 is grounded on the presence of coherent conceptions of the church as well as specific actions congruent with these conceptions. Thus, a full statement of synthesis is not made here, since Augustine may not have yet conceived of such but primarily because even if he had, it is not presented. Ultimately, the evidence allows only elements to be drawn out and implications drawn. Regardless, the key elements of a coherent ecclesial understanding are present.

The Emergence of Augustine's First Ecclesiological Synthesis

Augustine did not live as a Christian trying first to achieve understanding of faith and only then to put this into practice. His whole life was to be lived spiritually before God. The basic overarching perspective from which Augustine viewed, understood, and related to the church was his own pursuit of the spiritual life. The goal of the love of and service to God dictated his lifestyle and relationships. Specifically, the facilitation and responsibility of this spiritual life determined the way in which he fitted into the Catholic communion. Thus, his understanding and pursuit of the religious life gave a framework for his appreciation of and involvement in the church. In particular, by 391 Augustine had identified with the teachers of the Catholic religion and he had decided to work towards 'monastic' establishment. Overall, Augustine's appreciation and understanding of the church was a product and a part of his spiritual life.

The comprehensive concept for Augustine's understanding of the church was as part of God's salvific plan or work throughout history and throughout the world. In his conception of the church in history, the church comprises God's people throughout history: past, present, and future. Moreover, throughout history there are good and impious classes of people (a concept linked at Thagaste to spirituals and non-spirituals). The church of Augustine's age (the age of Christ and the church) flowed from the past work of God and his people (*i.e.* Old Testament, prophets, Christ).⁷ This overall plan and the church itself will culminate in the future.⁸ The church embraced all of the 'good' (whether visible or not) in its time. Together with all the 'good' throughout history and combined with the angels, these people constituted those who would live in

⁶ *e.g.* he sought a more formal religious context and referred for the first time to the position of local churches in his discussions of God's plan in the world and history.

⁷ *mor. ecc.* 7.12; *Gn. a. Man.* 1.22.34; 1.23.35-41.

⁸ including the separation of the good and the impious. This eventual culmination and separation of the church and those in it implies an idea of an invisible communion or church, embracing all the 'wheat', and a visible church that even now while still in a mixed state stands distinct from schism and heresy (which *uera rel.* represents as types of premature judgment).

the kingdom of God forever. In his conception of the church as part of God's plan in the world, the church is primarily the disseminator of true religion. This conception provided a framework for Augustine's view of the church of his day in terms of both process and institutions. In terms of process, the church fits into God's plan for salvation and spiritual living as providing the overall means for the spiritual life. Thus, Augustine discussed the church as a teacher, as a place of healing, and as an ascetic community for facilitating the spiritual living of all believers. In terms of institution, Augustine spoke of local churches, particularly in connection with the salvific preaching and teaching, training, and protecting of people for the spiritual life. He also spoke of the Catholic church as superseding other religious or cultural groups in the world (*e.g.* heretical movements, pagan philosophers, etc.), especially emphasizing the distinction of Catholic sacraments and worship. Secondly, Augustine conceived of the church in the world in terms of communion. The Christian communion was Catholic and unified in charity. Invisibly, it consisted of all true believers, visibly, both of spirituals and carnals.

The emergence can be traced through the pre-clerical period of each of the main lines of Augustine's ecclesiological synthesis: the church in history; the church in the world; and Augustine's activity in the church.⁹ The concept of the church in history began at Rome with Augustine's idea that the Catholic Christians of his day lived and served in a way that had been prepared by the Old Testament patriarchs, law and prophets, the incarnate Christ, the Apostles' testimony, the sacrifices of the martyrs of the church, and the conversion of the Gentiles.¹⁰ This preliminary understanding of the church in relation to history gained new subtlety from the interaction with scripture in exegesis which Augustine began in the first years at Thagaste. Specifically, Augustine conceived of seven ages of the world mirroring the days of creation. In each of these ages, the concern was the generation of the people of God as well as the mediation of divine provision towards the eventual eternal rest of contemplation of God in his presence.¹¹ In particular, the church of Augustine's day comes to be seen as existing in the age of Christ and the church, the sixth of the seven ages of biblical history. The church superseded the synagogue as Christ superseded Old Testament revelation in general. The age of Christ and his church fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament from Adam and Eve up through the prophets and anticipated the eternal

⁹ whereas all the significant points of ecclesial emergence were listed above, these traces are windows into the process of the emergence of synthesis.

¹⁰ *mor. ecc.* 7.12; a way identified in the following passage of 10.16 with that of the 'Catholic church' by its teachers.

¹¹ such discussions represent the first coherent conception of the church of his day with a place in history and they anticipate the discussion of temporal dispensations in *uera rel.*

heavenly kingdom of God. This was the final earthly age and anticipated the eternal spiritual 'rest' of the seventh in the presence of God. Also significant in the passages from *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans* which deal with scripture is the development in Augustine's understanding of the wheat and the tares. In the early Thagaste years, he came to think in terms of the fact that there were spiritual people in every age of history (and by implication also non-spirituals). Such refinements in Augustine's conception of the church in relation to and within all of history reached a coherent form in the last year at Thagaste. In *On True Religion*, the church is explicitly identified within God's 'temporal dispensations' of saving grace towards humanity. This specific position of the church as the conclusion of the divine temporal dispensations incorporated refinements along the lines of the ability to benefit even from the tares and the scope to embrace chaff without compromise or damage, since the church was identified with all believers throughout history. Moreover, the emphasis on the place of the church in and throughout history is stressed as among the chief interests of the Christian religion (*uera rel.* 7.13; 10.19). Augustine came to view the human race as comprised of two 'races', the good and the impious, throughout history. This led to a concept of the mixed nature of the church and the idea that only the day of judgment would make clear the wheat and the chaff (*uera rel.* 5.9; 6.10). Augustine also began to identify the good ones within God's people or the church with the angelic citizens of the eternal realm of God.

The concept of the church in the world can be broken down into several lines of emergence following the headings of: Catholic; teacher/teaching; communion; and relation of church to others.¹² The idea of the 'Catholic' church first appears in Augustine at Rome, but, in the writings from Rome, it is expressed as a fact but not as a doctrine. In this early idea, the church encompasses all believers everywhere.¹³ 'Catholic' is also first used as a title at Rome, especially in contrast to the Manichees. Catholic teaching is true teaching and Catholic teachers are the ones who grasp true understanding and can explain that truth.¹⁴ The idea of the church as Catholic may well have been stimulated at Milan where Augustine received Catholic instruction and identified with the church in his baptism.¹⁵ Furthermore, he certainly encountered the emphasis on the Catholic church in distinction to heretics in Ambrose's baptismal and credal expositions. Regardless, whether sparked at Milan or Rome, the idea was only thought through in some detail once Augustine was settled in Thagaste. There, a

¹² at points it is impossible to discern where these 'lines' are linked or separate from each other, but this is a reflection of the nature of the evidence.

¹³ *quant.* 33.74; *mor. ecc.* 30.62f.

¹⁴ *mor. ecc.* 10.16.

¹⁵ *cf. quant.* 33.76.

refinement appears as Augustine began to clearly identify the concept of the church Catholic with the ideal of asceticism. An example of this was his employment of a series of Catholic *exempla* in his argument how the true teaching of the church led to a holy or right manner of living (*mor. ecc.* 31.65f.). In their ascetic devotion to God, these Catholic *exempla* provided a proper representation of the church and the ascetic lifestyle of all of its members, regardless of vocation or situation of life. For Augustine, such a representation remained valid even though the true Christian communion was universal and did harbor those in need of stern correction (and even those who were not truly believers). The connection between Catholic and ascetic reached a final form over the course of the Thagaste period as Augustine spoke of the Catholic church as an ascetic communion and identified the results of the universal presence and action of the church with universal ascetic practice. In the later Thagaste years, the idea of the church Catholic also broadened into an understanding of the church as a universal teacher and place of healing, as well as ascetic communion. The titular connection between Catholic and Christian teaching first observed at Rome culminated at Thagaste in Augustine's conception of the church spread throughout the world in terms of individual churches with his articulation of the preaching and institutional processes by which the church disseminated 'true religion'. In addition to the coalescence of the idea of Catholic teacher, the development and articulation of the church as one communion of charity made up of smaller communities of charity, all based on the unity of God and the Christian paradigm of the great commandment, took place in the last year at Thagaste.

The clear significance of the connection between the 'church' and '*teaching*' in Augustine's early Christian years underwent considerable development. It is more than probable that the intensely ecclesial context of Augustine's Catholic initiatory instruction at Milan stimulated this connection. Yet, it also flowed from Augustine's educational interests and affinity for teaching. From his conversion, he was involved in spiritual education: first of himself in order to facilitate his chief goal which was the fulfillment of the spiritual life in the presence of God; and second of others as he desired initially to bring those close to him into his state of spiritual awareness and eventually to respond to the need for spiritual edification in the general Catholic communion from his position as an intellectual spiritual Christian. Nevertheless, it is at Rome that this educational idea appears in Augustine's writings in connection with the church. The writings from 387/388 place considerable emphasis both on the 'teachers' and 'teaching' of the 'Catholic church'. At Rome and early at Thagaste, one aspect of the idea of the church as teacher was as the locus of saving doctrine and instruction. Another aspect of the church as a teacher was as a place of protection from heretics.

Yet, it was only during the Thagaste period that, with greater sensitivity, Augustine wrote also with an eye to educate those of slower understanding in the church. This sensitivity to explanatory as well as defensive writing (teaching) combined with Augustine's more sophisticated engagement with scripture to lead to the kind of theological conceptions of the church in history described above.¹⁶ Augustine's conception of himself as a part of a Catholic communion which was obligated to both protect and hopefully educate those of slower understanding in the church developed significantly at Thagaste. This view came to resolution with the understanding later at Thagaste of the church as universal teacher in terms of its actual processes of instruction in *On True Religion*. Therefore, along with the emergence of this conception in the writings from Augustine's last year at Thagaste, in these writings he also adopted the position of teacher of the Catholic religion within this conceptual framework.

Another line of emergent understanding closely related to those of Catholic and teaching was Augustine's conception of the *communion* of the church. In addition to its expanse, it is possible to trace this aspect in terms of his view of the nature and the constituents of the general Christian communion. Even before the commencement of his ecclesial thought at Milan and Rome in 387/388, Augustine's writings at Cassiciacum reveal an elite view of society (along neo-Platonic lines). This translated into a conception of an elite hierarchy of those Christians who were in need of only the initial authority of Christ in order to come to God and those Christians who were not able to proceed beyond authority by reason thus needing to remain within the institutional church which would tell them what they ought to believe and how they ought to live. That is, the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* imply that Augustine did not need the church *per se* but only its initial mediation of the cleansing authority of Christ. In this position, Augustine was part of a small but significant group that was able to proceed spiritually by reason from the starting point of authority and thus was not in continued need of the church. It is probably the case that part of Augustine's experience of baptism at Milan entailed a conception of humiliation in identification with the masses of believers who could not understand spiritual incorporeal reality.¹⁷ At Rome, the conception of a hierarchical communion continued but in connection with a conception of the church. Augustine wrote in his first polemical works for those who were deceived by the tricks of the Manichees. Thus, in these writings, he not only communicated his affiliation to the Catholic church but also acted on its behalf both in light of those within the Catholic communion who were unable to grasp incorporeal

¹⁶ e.g. in *Gn. a. Man.*

¹⁷ a conception possibly reinforced by remembrance of Victorinus.

spiritual reality (defending and protecting them from error in their ignorance) and in light of the actions of those in the Catholic communion who do not live congruently with their spiritual beliefs, that is in a holy manner (condemning their actions and explaining their presence in the church). In the Thagaste years, however, Augustine's hierarchical understanding of the Christian communion was tempered. He began to be more affected by the concept of the communion of charity; and as this happened, his own sensitivity to those of slower understanding increased. He began to write not only for their protection but with the hopes that they would come to incorporeal understanding. This sensitivity is certainly seen in *On Genesis* and may have been a motivating factor in the eventual completion of Augustine's work *On Music*. In book six of this work, probably from early 390, a significant change in Augustine's conception of the Christian communion is found. Instead of those capable of understanding spiritual reality being the only ones who could be properly considered 'spirituals' in experience, Augustine came to recognize that those who could not (or did not) so understand were still able to come into spiritual communion with God not by reason but simply by the complete devotion of charity (*mus.* 6.17.59). Thus, the communion as Augustine understood it in his early ecclesiology consisted of intellectual spirituals, devoted spirituals, and carnal members. Moreover, in connection with Augustine's understanding of the wheat and the tares, by 390/391 he had conceived that the true church included all the wheat in its confines.¹⁸ Those who were part of the 'impious' in humanity down through the ages were linked to the tares¹⁹ or chaff.²⁰ Overall, the shift in conception of communion is not simply significant for the understanding it reveals but probably also for opening the way for Augustine's involvement in a formal monastery. Specifically, due to the potential of a sort of spiritual equality for all those in the church regardless of intellectual ability or background, such involvement became possible. This potential removed the hindrance of wanting to avoid contact with Catholic carnals who could pull him down from the spiritual realm) in an 'open' ascetic community (or congregation). Finally, the conception of being part of a communion of charity and Augustine's overall integrated Christian understanding appears to have encouraged a sense of responsibility to which he responded in adopting the positions of Catholic teacher and 'monastic' initiator.

A final area which can be traced through 386-391 of Augustine's emergent ecclesiological understanding of the church in the world is the *relation of church to others in world*. At Milan (and probably Cassiciacum), the Catholic church was seen

¹⁸ even those without its visible barriers who had been incorrectly ostracized, cf. *uera rel.* 6.11.

¹⁹ for example, those who went outside the Catholic communion into schism or heresy thus confirming their non-wheat status.

²⁰ who remained in the church to be separated only at the final judgment.

as the locus of cleansing authority. No other philosophy or religion contained the necessary authority to provide either protection from error or the freedom for reason to ascend to the incorporeal reality of God. At Rome, however, the concept of cleansing authority gained greater clarity in Augustine's idea of church as the necessary mother and instructor of all true Christians. From these clear ideas of the church, a conception of the Catholic church as the possessor of God's truth on earth emerged, a conception highlighted especially in contrast to the falsity of heretics. The relation of the true Catholic church in contrast to deceitful or blind heretics was also communicated in the first years at Thagaste. At the same time, a general idea of the people of God in relation to non-spirituals is also seen. With Augustine's discussion of the seven ages of biblical history, the constructs of the people of God in the Old Testament were described, specifically the synagogue which, while adequate for a time, was a carnal precursor to Christ and the church. Greater refinement in Augustine's conception of the church in relation to other cultural or religious groups in the world is seen, however, late at Thagaste. In *On True Religion*, the Catholic church is compared in some detail with pagans, philosophers, heretics, schismatics, and Jews. For Augustine, Christianity subsumes what was right in classical philosophy and, in contrast to the sacrilege and materialism of the pagan temples which the philosophers condoned, the church presents spiritual truth to all and provides a way for truth to be believed and followed (even if not understood). Moreover, the church is seen as the culmination of the Old Testament and the Jewish tradition which it had superseded in God's salvific plan. In relation to non-Catholics who claimed to be Christian, Augustine commented on heretics and, for the first time, on schismatics in terms of the wheat and the tares and in terms of distinctions in doctrine and sacrament between the 'orthodox' 'Catholic' church and these errors. In another refinement, he described the *process* of moving from the Catholic church into schism or heresy.

Ultimately, Augustine's conceptions of the church in the world as Catholic teacher and communion, seen in distinction to other ideologies and cultural/religious groups, link together in a consistent and interdependent way. The church is universal and unified. Its universal teaching (formally or informally, defensive or educational) generates and supports the universal communion of all believers in pursuit of God. This unified communion, while 'mixed' and made up of spirituals and carnals, is for all the home of truth and of right spiritual living leading to God.

The final rubric under which the emergence of Augustine's early ecclesiology may be traced is his own place and activity in the church. No discernible interest or action relative to the church could be identified at Cassiciacum, and Augustine's involvement in the church only really began with his baptism at Milan. Although it is difficult to

know how he perceived his place in the church immediately following baptism, Augustine at least thought of himself as one living in dedicated service to God. Soon, however, at Rome, he took on the role of defender of Catholic teaching and practice against his former co-religionists the Manichees. This marks a significant point in Augustine's personal and ecclesial development. It reflects: his personal concerns; his identification with the Catholic communion, teaching, and church; and his concern to work for the church. His place in the Christian communion was essentially that of an independent learned teacher. Nevertheless, the connection to the institutional or organized church is not clear at Rome. Augustine's instructional role increased in sensitivity in the first writings from Thagaste as he began to engage in more positive teaching and in scriptural exegesis. However, it remains unclear what Augustine's position was in his intimate community or in the broader Catholic circles at Thagaste. Finally, his response to the need for spiritual edification in the church is apparent in his adopting positions of responsibility in line with his status as an intellectual spiritual in *On Music* and *On True Religion*. In the latter of these in particular, he identified himself with the position of a teacher of the Catholic religion (in contextual terms linked to the general preaching, teaching, saving work of church, especially in local churches, throughout the world). The eventual vocational result of these stages of developing ecclesial position and activity was Augustine's decision to act as a 'monastic' initiator. Such an action was particularly congruent with his overall ecclesial understanding. The spiritual life was to be ascetic and in Augustine's view a monastery provided the ideal communal context for that life. Moreover, a recognized monastery afforded a recognized position in the overall work of the church in the world and, because of the potential of spiritual equality for all, facilitated spiritual edification and responsible education without the danger of comprising (by busyness or associations) one's life before God. Thus, for Augustine, it was in a 'monastic' setting that the fulfillment of the love of God and the love of others in the Christian communion could best be achieved.

Framework for Future Development

Following his ordination in 391, Augustine entered a clear ecclesiastical environment and in this environment was forced to consolidate and further develop his thought on the church. The understanding achieved over the period between Augustine's conversion and ordination, identified in this study, provided the initial framework for such future ecclesiological development. In the immediate term, as a result of his new ecclesiastical position and responsibilities between his clerical (391) and episcopal (396) ordinations, Augustine's ecclesiology continued to develop with new urgency.

His theological understanding of the church, as well as other areas, was accelerated in its development by his clerical office.²¹ Two theologically significant examples of this acceleration were his increased exegesis, particularly in connection with preaching, and the consolidation of his 'monastic' life. In terms of preaching/exegesis, between 391-396, Augustine began expositions on (and detailed involvement with) the Psalms. Oden's recent study highlights the recognized importance of these expositions for Augustine's ecclesiology.²² It is noteworthy that the basis of ecclesial exegesis (and the emergence of significant theological conceptions of the church from exegesis) was established in the pre-clerical period, at Thagaste. Also established there was the conviction that his spiritual understanding should be shared in the general Christian communion. In terms of monastic codification, it was between 391-396 that Augustine probably wrote his monastic rule and that the basic formulation of his future clerical monastery emerged.²³ In fact, this clerical monastic area of development represents the most obvious marriage between his ecclesial direction of 390/391 and the actual clerical context in which he found himself following his trip to Hippo.²⁴

Because of these important developments, scope exists for future study of ecclesiological progress during the presbyter years. A coherent understanding of the church was in place in 391 at the beginning of this period. In addition to the advance of this understanding from monastic and clerical preaching activities, these years witnessed other specific ecclesiological stimuli and developments. For example, the ecclesiological side of Augustine's involvement in the Manichaean 'controversy' came to fruition in 392-393.²⁵ Also, probably of greater ecclesiological significance,

²¹ cf. F. Hoffmann, *Der Kirchenbegriff des hl. Augustinus in seinen Grundlagen und in seiner Entwicklung* (1933), 74-75. In this, Augustine's request for a period of concentrated scripture reading to gain insight for his new clerical vocation (*ep.* 21) was granted by bishop Valerius. The significance of this time, possibly as a major reflection and re-evaluation of personal direction and understanding of his position in and relative to the institutional and organized church, should not be underestimated.

²² A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (Diss. Southern Methodist Univ. 1990). Among various images of the church, Oden focuses most on the image of the church as body (*esp.* Christ's body). She argues that this image (and others such as bride, mother, winnowing, etc.) in the matrix of preaching demonstrate that Augustine's mature ecclesiology was 'as concerned with the ongoing, concrete life of the church as ... with the church's ultimate destiny' (p. 6). Also in connection with the scriptures, Bonner notes that Augustine interaction with scripture in 391 sparked significant changes, 'vitally affected his theological outlook' (*cf.* 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* (1990), 520).

²³ cf. L. Verheijen, *St. Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32-35* (1979), 44-47 (p. 45 situates the *Rule* just after Augustine's episcopal ordination).

²⁴ cf. e.g. L. Verheijen, *St. Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32-35* (1979), 15-16.

²⁵ cf. F. Hoffmann, *Der Kirchenbegriff des hl. Augustinus* (1933), 76-123 (*esp.* 99f.). In such developments, there are possible later ecclesial influences from Augustine's early years and from the period discussed in this thesis. These influences were not apparent during the period 386-391 (and thus were not discussed in this thesis) but may have emerged later (*esp.* in combination with aspects of the presbyter period). Two possible examples relate to Manichaeism. Hoffmann focuses on the connection of the pre-clerical and presbyter years of the Manichaean 'controversy' as generating Augustine's understanding of the authority of the church. Van Oort discusses the pre-conversion

between 392 and 396 Augustine first read Tyconius – the Donatist lay theologian’s articulations of the bipartite body of Christ and views on biblical interpretation and ‘history’ probably significantly focused Augustine’s own.²⁶ Finally, during his years as a presbyter, he began to interact with the Donatists. It was this controversy, above all, which provided particular impetus and focus for his ecclesiological development.²⁷

Following his office as presbyter, the majority of Augustine’s Christian life was spent as the bishop of Hippo. It was as the bishop of this small town that he devoted himself to the monastic life and the welfare of his congregation (and fellow citizens), and it was from Hippo that he exercised his extended and enduring influence. Augustine’s mature ecclesiological formulations constitute an important part of this influence. The early ecclesiology identifiable by 391 gave a foundation (if incomplete) for these mature formulations.²⁸ The three major aspects of Augustine’s ecclesiology of 391 form a starting point for future ecclesiological trajectories. Only a few examples can be considered here, but even these show the relevance of the early ecclesiology to later developments and the scope for future studies on the development of Augustine’s ecclesiological concepts.

One primary example of the trajectory of his ecclesiological progression relates to the early conception of the church in history. This line of thought ultimately led into the ideas expressed in Augustine’s *City of God*. Specifically, the ‘great work’ was foreshadowed in the ideas of: the division of humanity into two races – the good and the impious; the implied conception of an invisible church; the connection of the people of God throughout history (particularly in the church) with the angelic servants of God; and in the awareness of the church in terms of God’s temporal dispensations. Thus, some of the basic concepts, in many respects, underlying the *City of God* represent one enduring legacy from the ecclesial understanding achieved by 391.²⁹

Manichaean ‘origin’ of aspects of Augustine’s idea of the two cities (*Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine’s City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (1991), 199-234 and 351-352).

²⁶ cf. A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church ...* (1990), 105-107.

²⁷ cf. G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 3-4; R.F. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 65-91; and A.G. Oden, *Dominant Images for the Church ...* (1990), 93f.

²⁸ certainly, his mature thought on the church flowed from more than his ecclesial synthesis of 391. Still, basic foundations of his later ecclesiology were laid by that point and key later elements derive from the early formulations. Thus, it is appropriate to note briefly some examples of how his coherent ecclesial understanding reached before ordination relates to the manifold mature Augustinian doctrine of the church.

²⁹ other aspects of the church in history continued as well. Bonner summarizes Markus’ discussion (cf. *Saeculum* (1970), 9) of Augustine’s appreciation of a ‘privileged strand’ of history: ‘There was, however, one particular branch of history, a “privileged strand,” in which Augustine, as a Christian, could not fail to be interested: ‘the biblical narrative of God’s saving work among His chosen people.’ This constitutes “sacred history,” the story of God’s plan of salvation for all men.’ (*Quid Imperatori cum Ecclesia?* St. Augustine on History and Society’, *Aug. Stud.* 2 (1971), 233). The attention and discussion of God’s salvific plan throughout history certainly points back to the pre-clerical period.

Among Augustine's pre-clerical conceptualizations of the church in the world, the idea of the church as a communion of charity was another basis for a significant line of future development. As Augustine entered the Donatist controversy, where the church itself was the focus of attention, his early significant idea of the church as a universal communion unified in charity constituted the basis of argument against the Donatist schismatic position. By 391, Augustine conceived of the basis of the church's unity in charity as derived from the unity of the Godhead and from the paradigm of the great commandment. Such a perspective provided a fundamental position against schism in general, which (almost by definition) contradicted unity and charity. Moreover, Augustine's emphasis on the universal body of charity in this controversy probably derived in part from his earlier experience in Italy of the truth and ascetic devotion of the worldwide Catholic communion. Of the manifold ecclesial or ecclesiastical aspects discussed in his writings against the Donatists (*e.g.* Augustine's later treatment of baptism), however, comments on only a few had been made by 391.³⁰ The only clear starting points for later development in this connection were Augustine's identification of schismatics with the 'tares' and his distinction of schismatics from Catholics in terms of the Catholic sacraments.³¹ The early idea of responsibility to the general Christian communion in charity, especially from a position as an intellectual *spiritalis*, also probably provided the basis of Augustine's view of his instructional clerical duties (such as catechesis or preaching). Elements of significant later development both in the Donatist controversy and other later writings also include such earlier ideas of the church in the world as: the teacher of true religion; the mother of all true Christians; and a communion comprised of spirituals and carnals. As noted, the important continuation of the 'monastic' direction achieved, by 391, as the result of Augustine's developing position in, actions for, and view of the church, and codified in the clerical monastic development between 391 and 396, constitute a final example of the influence in later ecclesial progress of Augustine's early Christian years.

Thus, in relation to the work of scholars like Lamirande and Borgomeo, or more recently, Oden, this study and its conclusions contribute as a precursor. Augustine's thought on the church, practically or theologically, did not begin only after he entered the clergy at Hippo. By late 390/early 391, some of the later elements of Augustine's ecclesiological thought and the foci of that thought were present in coherent form, and later analyses could profitably incorporate his early formulations. Objects of scholarly

³⁰ certainly, in 391, Augustine's thought on the church lacked the subtlety from contrasts or focused attention which would emerge against the Donatists.

³¹ *e.g.* *uera rel.* 5.8-9. Although Augustine refers to schismatics in *uera rel.*, at the end of the pre-clerical period, there is no direct evidence of familiarity with the Donatists until more than a year after his ordination; cf. G. Bonner, 'Augustinus (uita)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 536.

attention such as the ‘heavenly church’ (and its relation to the heavenly ‘city of God’), as discussed by Lamirande; the ‘practical’ visible church ‘of these times’, as discussed by Borgomeo; or on the spiritual body of Christ especially in connection with the Church in its present form as discussed by Oden; or the general relation of the visible to invisible church in Augustine’s thought, – all contain elements which first appear in the pre-clerical period. It has been noted that for Augustine,

The Church lives in two worlds: in the present age (*in hoc temporum cursu*) and in the age to come (*in illa stabilitate sedis aeternae, quam nunc expectat per patientiam* [ciu. 1.1]). No ecclesiology which neglects either of these worlds can be called satisfactory, and it is precisely his consciousness of the tension between them which makes Augustine’s ecclesiology fruitful.³²

Ultimately, before he had set foot in Hippo, the basis laid by Augustine’s ecclesial synthesis of late 390/early 391 and the resultant ecclesial actions which followed this understanding both foreshadowed the ‘fruitful’ combination of his mature ecclesiology.

The Young Augustine

In considering his various opinions, understandings, and doctrines, Augustine is best approached in terms of his general personal development.³³ Thus, generally, this study has followed the emergence of his early ecclesiology from within his overall development. The previous discussions summarized the emergence of significant ecclesial aspects of Augustine’s early Christian ideas, practices, and understandings during the period 386-391 and the emergence from these aspects of a first coherent ecclesiology. These comprise the principal contributions of this study to the understanding both of Augustine’s ecclesiology and of the young Christian Augustine. Although the church has not been a focus of attention for scholarship on Augustine’s early Christian years, it played a significant role in his development. Aside from the obvious shaping of his conception of the church itself, it provided the rudiments of his Christian understanding.³⁴ Moreover, the church provided the conceptual framework for his position as a Christian in service to God.

Furthermore, information about the church functions as a link between the monastic and philosophic emphases of scholarship on the early Christian period. Augustine’s understanding of the church in this period flowed from his pursuit of the spiritual life before God. Because he understood ‘spirit’ in neo-Platonic terms of

³² G. Bonner: ‘*Quid Imperatori cum Ecclesia?* St. Augustine on History and Society’, *Aug. Stud.* 2 (1971), 250.

³³ rarely, if ever, were Augustine’s thoughts expressed in systematic form or in isolation from his position in and activities of life or other theological considerations.

³⁴ specifically, the basic Catholic mysteries and doctrines, Catholic spiritual teaching and spiritual understanding, and examples of spiritual teachers.

incorporeal reality following his conversion, his ideal of the spiritual life incorporated the ascent, by reason, of the soul to God. Thus, his life of love and service for God focused on simultaneously keeping attention on the spiritual as well as utilizing corporeal things well in order to reach incorporeal revelation, experience, and understanding. Results of this ideal included: his pursuit of true philosophy; his discussions of the liberal arts; his attention to language and the true communication of Christ (the interior teacher); his exegesis (*e.g.* of the seven days of creation symbolizing the stages of spiritual advance to God); and the hierarchical view of humanity which his apologetic writings contain. All of these constitute considerable areas of study, but progress in understanding the relation of ascetic practice to the spiritual life was of special ecclesial significance.³⁵ This progress augments the attention of Teske, among others, to Augustine's early view of Christians as 'spirituals' and 'animals', or 'little ones'. Moreover, this study augments Teske's attention to (and English translation of) *Gn. a. Man.* This work has been shown to be ecclesially significant. Also, this thesis shows that the breakdown of 'spirituals' and carnal 'little ones' fitted into the framework of the church as a Catholic communion in Augustine's early understanding. Finally, a shift in this breakdown towards the end of the Thagaste period has been identified.³⁶

In general, study of Augustine's ecclesial ideas, actions, and relations in the pre-clerical period illuminates his ability to absorb influences and synthesize them into a unique course of life. The emergence of ecclesial conceptions in this course of life reflects the exploration and response to what it means to live spiritually in service to God and to live under the great commandment paradigm. Augustine's commitment to God in baptism and 'service' at the beginning of the period manifested his love for God. Over the course of the period, his writings for the Catholic church, his exegesis and Christian explanation for the spiritual children of the church, and his decision to live in 'open' monastic community and with teaching responsibility manifested his love for God in terms of love for others. In 386, Augustine came to Catholic Christianity with the goal of seeking understanding of truth by reason based on authority. By 391, he had come to a comprehensive (though of course incomplete) Christian understanding. While there were many aspects of his life during this time which were

³⁵ originally, at Cassiciacum and Milan, the ascetic/religious life drew Augustine's attention as pure devotion in light of (but not necessarily connected with) spiritual belief. Then, as he moved from Milan back to Africa, he began to view this life as pure devotion to God and spiritual contemplation (*e.g.* Catholic ascetics fit into the neo-Platonic ideal). Finally, at Thagaste, the end of *On Music* reveals Augustine's theoretical comprehension of *how* the religious ascetic life facilitated the spiritual life (the spiritual experience of God).

³⁶ namely, from a more hierarchical view to a more open communion of intellectual spirituals, devoted spirituals, and carnals.

abandoned or cut short (*e.g.* his liberal arts program or his familial interactions), his progress in ecclesial terms was clear and consistent, if not dominant. Ultimately, the line of personal and ecclesial progress from 386 to 391 implies that when Augustine came to Hippo it was as a confident step moving forward in spiritual service to God in the framework of his work and his church on earth.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL ISSUES

This thesis, being an attempt to trace a development in Augustine's thought, is dependent on the ordering and particular chronological assignments of the primary texts. The positions adopted have tended to be conservative. In the body of the thesis, general information and arguments about the dating of works from Cassiciacum, Milan, Rome, and Thagaste have been presented in the appropriate chapters.¹ These statements and arguments are sufficient to support the use that has been made of Augustine's works. A number of particular issues stand outside the scope and flow of the discussions in the chapters, however, and these are addressed here in four areas of discussion, *i.e.*: general information and a complete table of Augustine's works, 386-391; the issues and arguments surrounding the dating of the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*; J.K. Coyle's division of *mor. ecc.* into Roman and African portions; and a summary, by work, of references to chronology in the thesis.²

1. General Information and Chronological Table: In the body of the thesis, generally the most recent, standard opinions on the chronology of Augustine's various works from 386 to 391 have been followed. Most specifically, I have followed J.K. Coyle's discussion of *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.*³ in his *Augustine's De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (1978).⁴ More generally, I have used O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1968) as a starting point.⁵ For the chronology of the epistles, the dates given in the translation in the *FC* series have been used as a basic guide.⁶ This assigns

¹ the end of this appendix gives references, by work, to chronological comments given in the body of the thesis.

² in the appendices, as in the notes, abbreviations are used when referring to Augustine's works.

³ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 65f.

⁴ a summary of Coyle's argument is given in ch. 3, p. 70-72; see also below, for more details and some qualifications and reservations.

⁵ esp. p. 432-435. Table 6 below represents the basic sources which have been consulted. In the body of the thesis, dating statements have been modified and narrowed in line with (esp. recent) statements in the literature on specific works, and some of my specific arguments.

⁶ W. Parsons (trans.), *Saint Augustine. Letters* v. 1 (1-82), *FC* 12 (1951). See also, J.H. Baxter in *LCL* (1930): *ep.* 2, 386 (p. 3); *ep.* 4, 387 (p. 5); *ep.* 10, 389 (p. 9); *ep.* 15, 390 (p. 13); *ep.* 16, 390 (p. 17); *ep.* 17, 390 (p. 21); *ep.* 21, 391 (p. 33); and A.L. Goldbacher in *CSEL* 58.2 (1923), *Pars* 5, Index 3, p. 12-13, who gives: *ep.* 1; 2; 3; 4; 13 from Cassiciacum between autumn, 386, and early spring, 387; *ep.* 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14 from Thagaste starting in the autumn of

ep. 1 and 2 to '386'; 3 and 4 to 387; *ep.* 5 to '388'; *ep.* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13⁷ to '389'; *ep.* 14 to 'some time before 391'; *ep.* 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 to 'c. 390'; and *ep.* 21 to '391'.⁸ With *83 Different Questions*, the idea that the first 50 questions are from Thagaste has been adopted – though I have generally taken qu. 1-24 to be from earlier at Thagaste and qu. 26-50 from later at Thagaste.⁹ The following table gives all of Augustine's works begun between 386 and 391 and the general parameters for their dates as derived from Perler, Brown, and Bardy.¹⁰

Table 6: Inception and completion dates for Augustine's works, 386-391

Works	O. Perler, <i>Les voyages de s. Augustin</i> (1969), 432-435.	P. Brown, <i>Augustine of Hippo</i> (1968), 74.	G. Bardy, <i>Les Revisions, BA 12</i> (1950), 563-573.
	Inception Completion	Inception Completion	Inception Completion
<i>Acad.</i>	386 (Nov.) same	386 (Nov.) same	386 (Nov.) same
<i>beata u.</i>	386 (Nov.) same	386 (Nov.) same	386 (Nov.) same
<i>ord.</i>	386 (Nov.) same	386 (Dec.) same	386 (Nov.) same
<i>sol.</i>	386/387 (winter) same	386/387 (winter) same	end 386/beg. 387 same
<i>imm. an.</i>	387 (Jan./Feb.) same	387 same	beg. 387 same
<i>mor. ecc.</i>	387/388 389	388 388-390	la. 387/ea. 388 389
<i>quant.</i>	387/388 387/388	388 same	388 same
<i>lib. arb.</i> ¹¹	388 (bk. 1) same	388 (bk. 1) same	388 (bk. 1) same
<i>mor. Man.</i>	387/388 389	388-390 same	387/388 389
<i>diu. qu.</i>	388 395/396	388 396	388 c. 396
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i>	388-390 same	388/389 same	389 same
<i>mus.</i>	388-390 same	387	387 389
<i>mag.</i>	388-390 388-390	389 389	389 389
<i>uera rel.</i>	390 390	389-391 389-391	la. 389/ea. 390 ea. 390

388; and *ep.* 15 (from 389-390); 16; 17; 18; 19; 20 from Thagaste but probably later than the first group (particularly 18; 19; and 20). G.J.P. O'Daly, in his section on 'Letters from Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 779-780, includes *ep.* 13 along with *ep.* 1-4 as from the villa.

⁷ *ep.* 13 is assigned, probably rightly, to Cassiciacum by O'Daly (see preceding note) and Goldbacher.

⁸ W. Parsons, *FC* 12 (1951), 3, 5-6, 11-14, 20-21, 23, 25, 30-31, 33 n. 1, 36-37, 39, 43-45, 47.

⁹ see ch. 4 n. 38 and Table 4.

¹⁰ the order used in the table is that found in Perler (essentially by inception) with the exception of the separation of *mor. Man.* from *mor. ecc.*, following Coyle (see discussion below, section 3) (also, in the chapter chronological tables I have reversed *mag.* and *mus.* as does J. Rist, most recently, in *Augustine* (1994), xvii). Where periods (e.g. 388-390) have been given they have been given for both inception and completion unless otherwise specifically noted by the authors.

¹¹ cf. O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 146 and n. 6, for comments on 'book one'. See the appropriate reference at the end of the appendix, however, for discussions of the possible inclusion of work up through bk. 2.16 in 388.

2. Dating the Cassiciacum Dialogues: Augustine indicated in his *Review*¹² that he wrote down or noted a series of discussions (which he implied form the basis of his first three *Dialogues*) in the period surrounding his birthday (13 Nov.) in 386. O'Meara¹³ notes the 'actual days' of the writing of the first three dialogues given by Ohlmann¹⁴ and Van Haeringen,¹⁵ but he clarifies that such details may have been added as a literary convention. O'Daly ('Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 778) gives 'a typical scheme of discussions' which is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Scheme of possible discussion or composition of Augustine's first *Dialogues*

Dates\Works (in order of discussion or composition)				
1. <i>Acad.</i>	2. <i>beata u.</i>	3. <i>ord.</i>	4. <i>Acad.</i>	5. <i>ord.</i>
10 Nov. 1.5-10	13 Nov. 6-16	16-19 Nov. -----	22 Nov. 2.10-24	25 Nov. 2.1-54
11 Nov. 1.11-15	14 Nov. 17-22	20 Nov. 1.6-26	23 Nov. 2.25-30	(or later)
12 Nov. 1.16-25	15 Nov. 23-26	21 Nov. 1.27-33	24 Nov. 3.1-45	

O'Daly notes, however, that 'doubts remain' over such schemes. Among the problems that emerge: *retr.* 1.2 may refer to sequence of composition not discussion; *Acad.* 2.10 notes a seven-day break of discussion which, if actual, does not fit in with the 'typical' scheme tabulated; and such schemes presuppose aspects like Alypius' absence for their synchronization (but did he leave?, and did he leave more than once?).¹⁶ Ultimately, Augustine's language is not precise enough to allow certainty. Happily, the details of the composition of the *Dialogues* are not fundamentally important to this thesis. In ecclesial terms, the basic distinction is between the Cassiciacum works and those later (slight shifts have been noted at Cassiciacum between the first three dialogues and *sol.*, but there is no question that *sol.* was later than the others). As suggested by Table 7, the first three *Dialogues* were held and/or composed in November (possibly into December) of 386, and *sol.* was probably in January or February of 387. This placement is more than sufficient for present purposes.

3. J.K Coyle on *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*: The questions of chronology surrounding Augustine's *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* are quite complex. The general position adopted in this Appendix is presented and explained in chapter 3, Table 2 and

¹² cf. 1.2.1 and 1.3.1. See G. Bardy, *Les Revisions*, BA 12 (1950), 127, for a summary.

¹³ *St. Augustine. Against the Academics*, ACW 12 (1951), 26.

¹⁴ D. Ohlmann, *De sancti Augustini dialogis in Cassiciaco scriptis* (1897, Diss. Strasbourg).

¹⁵ J.H. Van Haeringen, *De Augustini ante baptismum rusticantis operibus* (1917, Diss. Groningae).

¹⁶ cf. G.J.P. O'Daly, 'Cassiciacum', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 778.

pages 69-72. Essentially, his division has been provisionally adopted and thus more details of his investigation are provided here. Yet, I have some reservations about the complete conclusions of Coyle,¹⁷ and these reservations are also outlined below.

As Coyle's study indicates, if we accept the statements in Augustine's *Review* literally then the dating of *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* is straightforward. The *Review* reads, 'Now, having been baptized, while I was at Rome, being unable to endure with silence the boasting of the Manichaeans, ... I wrote two books: one, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, and the other, *On the Morals of the Manichaeans*' (*retr.* 1.6.1).¹⁸ When one takes into account other chronological indications within these and other works, however, the issue does not remain so clear.

Coyle's first point is that these two works ought to be considered as originally separate.¹⁹ Augustine often used the term 'book' (*liber*) to denote different parts of one work. Yet his mention of these two books in the *Review* is the only place in his writings where two books, apparently of the same work, each have their own title. In addition, towards the end of *mor. ecc.*, Augustine referred to *mor. Man.* as another 'volume' (*uolumen*). Coyle notes that this is a term which seems to be restricted to self-contained works.²⁰ He concludes, 'So at the outset, while *mor. I* is still in writing, *mor. II* is considered to be a separate *uolumen* and only later does it come to be looked on by Augustine as the second of "duo libri"'.²¹ Furthermore, 'the mention of a single book in line 25 [*mor. ecc.* 1.2] ("hic liber") strengthens the impression that originally Augustine intended writing only "book I"'.²² Also, in both *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.*, Augustine indicated that he was no longer at Rome.²³ Indeed, *mor. Man.* speaks of having been 'recently in Carthage' (*mor. Man.* 12.26),²⁴ which surely refers

¹⁷ whose Augustine's *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* (1978) is the primary recent critical study of either of these texts. Its arguments form the basis of the discussion of *mor. ecc.* in ch. 3. His new article, 'De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae: Augustin Chrétien à Rome', in Coyle, et al., «*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum*» «*De quantitate animae*» di AGOSTINO D'IPPONA (1991), 13-57, does not present any change in position or add new levels of chronological argument (cf. ch. 4 n. 61).

¹⁸ *Iam baptizatus autem cum Romae essem, nec tacitus ferre possem Manicheorum iactantiam de falsa et fallaci continentia uel abstinentia, ... scripsi duos libros, unum de moribus ecclesiae catholicae et alterum de moribus Manicheorum.* CCL 57. 18.

¹⁹ J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 68.

²⁰ J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 68; not always, however, as the reference to '*De Musica sex uolumina*' in *retr.* 1.6 (CCL 52. 17) indicates.

²¹ J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 68.

²² J.K. Coyle, Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 70 n. 293 (Coyle considers *mor. ecc.* 1.2 to have begun the Roman draft).

²³ *Romae etiam plura cognoui* (*mor. ecc.* 33.70, CSEL 90. 74); and *Romae autem absente quid gestum sit, totum longum est explicare ... et ego quidem postea Romae cum essem* (*mor. Man.* 20.74, CSEL 90. 154).

²⁴ *quod nuper apud Carthaginem audiui.* CSEL 90. 110.

to Augustine's stay there on the way back to Thagaste in 388.²⁵ Thus, Coyle demonstrates that the issues are more complicated than the *Review* suggests.

The most important comment which casts doubt on the *Review*, however, is found at the beginning of *mor. ecc.*, where Augustine stated:

In *other books*, we have, I believe, been able to sufficiently counteract [answer] the invective of the Manichaeans, which in ignorance and impiety they bring against the law which is called the Old Testament – [arguments] with which they agitate with empty ostentation amidst the applause of the ignorant (*italics mine, mor. ecc. 1.1*).²⁶

The reference to other, prior books against the Manichees seems to create a contradiction because the *Review* presents *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* as the first works against them. Coyle observes, however, that this can be resolved if one accepts that it was Augustine's practice in the *Review* to list works by order of their inception and not completion.²⁷ The 'other books' probably refer to *Gn. a. Man.* Coyle writes,

Augustine began "De moribus" at Rome, but ... it was unfinished by the time he left for Africa; once in Thagaste, he turned his attention to the problem of the Old Testament ... wrote and published *Gen. c. Man.*, and then turned his attention once more to "De moribus". This pushes the publication of "De moribus" back even later, to at least early in 389.²⁸

Coyle presents his version of the chronology around the idea that the first draft of *mor. ecc.* was mostly completed in Rome, beginning with chapter two and ending with Augustine's eulogy of the church in chapter 30 (*i.e.* without 1.1 or 31.65-35.80).²⁹ He draws attention to the different focus of these 'added' sections. In *mor. ecc. 1.1*, Augustine stated that he was going to treat scripture briefly; whereas in *mor. ecc. 1.2*, he outlined a twofold emphasis for the work in which he would defend Catholic teaching and scripture.³⁰ Moreover, the 'last five chapters ... seem to form a bridge leading to *mor. II*' and seem to forget the idea of backing up their arguments with Old Testament texts. He concludes:

²⁵ O. Perler, *Les voyages de saint Augustin* (1969), 432.

²⁶ *In aliis libris satis opinor egisse nos, quemadmodum Manichaeorum inuentionibus, quibus in legem quod uetus testamentum uocatur imperite atque impie feruntur seseque inter imperitorum plausus inani iactatione uentilant, possimus occurrere.* CSEL 90. 3; cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 67.

²⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 69. This was certainly the case with *lib. arb. (retr. 1.9.1)*, though in that case Augustine clarified that he finished the work later in North Africa. Coyle himself notes that *mus.*, from this period, is an exception to 'Bardy's theory that the *Retractationes* tend to list works chronologically, not according to when they were completed, but according to when they were begun' (Coyle, 69 n. 290), since the *Review* lists it after *Gn. a. Man.* despite the fact that it was begun in Milan (*retr. 1.6*; see ch. 5 n. 18, for text). Coyle notes that this is because 'it [*mus.*] seems then [at Milan] to have been in very rough form'. It must be said, however, that the entry on the liberal disciplines in *retr. 1.6* does imply Augustine's care to note basic details of the finishing of his works.

²⁸ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 74.

²⁹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 71.

³⁰ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 77.

Their changes from the earlier chapters – their avoidance of comparison with the Old Testament, their lessened Scriptural emphasis, their accent on Christian moral *practice* rather than *principles* – lead one to suspect that they are a later addition to a work that originally came to an end with the eulogy of the Church in Chapter XXX.³¹

It is impossible to be completely sure what process of composition was followed with a work that developed in stages as *mor. ecc.* seems to have, but Coyle's model is certainly coherent and plausible.

While Coyle's argument is certainly rigorous, certain aspects of support he claims from contextual considerations may be questionable in light of this thesis. For example, he states:

since *mor. I*'s last five chapters ... concern the *practice* of Christian asceticism, about which nothing is said at the beginning of the work, where Augustine's stated purpose is to discuss Christian *teaching* on the moral life; and since these five chapters give special attention to community ... life among Christians: in them we possibly have an addition ... If these chapters represent an addition, the likeliest explanation for their presence is that they were inspired by Augustine's projected or already achieved establishment of a community of his own at Thagaste. Assuming that Augustine established this community immediately upon his arrival, and allowing for the completion of *mor. I* and the redaction of *mor. II*, we come to a date that cannot be earlier than the end of 388.³²

A number of possible qualifications arise. First, the move from discussion of Christian moral teaching to discussion of Christian moral *exempla* does follow a simple logical progression. Given the ascetic input at Rome (let alone the probable input from Milan), even if the later chapters do represent a development, why not a development at Rome? Basically, Augustine's decision 'At some time, it seems, ... to go beyond the intention he declared in § 2, and to directly attack Manichaean morality',³³ identified by Coyle, could well have occurred at Rome. Second, the connection of the 'special attention' given to Christian communal life at the end of *mor. ecc.* with the Thagaste community is not so clear as Coyle suggests, nor does such a connection necessarily yield the implication he draws. Augustine's intention for a devoted Christian group in Africa (probably at Thagaste) emerged at Milan, shortly after his baptism (*cf. conf.* 9.8.17). Chapter three discussed how Augustine may have been stimulated to consider Christian asceticism during his stay at Rome in 387/388. Moreover, as shown in chapter four, the status of the Thagaste community in 388-389 is not clear. A 'new' ascetic emphasis is not found in the earlier certain written activity at Thagaste (*e.g. Gn. a. Man., mag.,*

³¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 79.

³² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 71.

³³ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 77 (and f.). Coyle notes, 'The polemics of *mor. II* are in sharp contrast to *mor. I*, and in style and tone the two books are not at all two parts of the same work but separate works. *Mor. I* is conciliatory ... [and designed not to convert but prevent attacks on the Old Testament]; in *mor. II* his purpose is to persuade them to "relinquish their error" [*mor. Man.* 2.2.4]'.

or the probable revision of *mus.* books 1-5), nor is it consistent with the later evidence, only in 390 (in *mus.* bk. 6 and *uera rel.*), of a crystallized understanding of the ascetic life and of Augustine's 'monastic direction'. Certainly, there are questions for any assertion of a 'foundation' on Augustine's part at Thagaste of a structured community like those witnessed in Rome before late 390.³⁴ Thus, Coyle's 'likeliest explanation' for the insertion of the last five chapters, *i.e.* that they were inspired by a communal life in the Thagaste community which mirrored and was defined as the communities seen or heard about in Rome, seems quite uncertain. The Thagaste community was probably not defined or founded (in an official sense) in 388-389. Moreover, Augustine's actions in this time were those of an absorber, not an imitator. The idea that Augustine's established community might have inspired the later chapters of *mor. ecc.* (and presumably the attention to recollection of ascetic practice heard of at Rome and/or the attempt to gain more information about it) seems less plausible than that inspiration from Rome, reflected in the last five chapters of *mor. ecc.*, was one influence that led to the unique, developing religious/philosophic community at Thagaste. Thus, contrary to Coyle's 'likeliest explanation' for the presence of chapters 32f. in *mor. ecc.*, if they are an addition, that 'they were inspired by Augustine's projected or already achieved establishment' of the Thagaste community, the more probable and straightforward inspiration was his observation and hearing about these ascetic communities while at Rome. Ultimately, however, even if this portion of *mor. ecc.* (31.67f.) and nearly all of *mor. Man.* were written after Augustine's return to Africa, they still reveal that while in Rome he had become quite familiar with the ascetic/'monastic' movement that was emerging and expanding in the West.³⁵

Coyle's final adjustment to the traditional chronological understanding of *mor. ecc.* is also somewhat questionable. He argues that the so-called 'trinitarian excursus' of *mor. ecc.* (paragraphs 22-24 and 26-34) were probably added in North Africa.³⁶ He states that by removing these sections an unbroken line of discussion of the virtues results:

Toward the end of Chapter XII Augustine interrupts his discussion on the attainment of the happy life (through *uirtus*, ...) to prepare to make, for the first time in the work, explicit mention of God as *triune*. This comes in lines 409-428 ... then runs to nearly halfway through Chapter XIV, whereupon Augustine returns to his earlier discussion on the happy life. In Chapter XV he begins to discuss the four cardinal virtues, but halts at § 27 to re-enter the trinitarian theme, ... to run unbroken to the end of Chapter XVIII, ... At the beginning of Chapter XVIII he goes back once more to his discussion of the cardinal virtues. This interweaving of themes, and the manner in which he closes this trinitarian section (line 615), which is not referred to again, give it all the

³⁴ see ch. 4, p. 177-185. At the very least there are indications of gradually increasing ascetic/'monastic' emphases in the community over Thagaste period and of new action only toward the end of the period in (probably late) 390.

³⁵ esp. *mor. ecc.* 31.65-66 and 32.69-34.74, which is all that is required in ch. 3.

³⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 241-242f.

earmarks of a later addition to the pristine text; for by marking off these trinitarian passages we find that the texts surrounding them run in a continuous theme.³⁷

Such successful unraveling of themes may indicate an addition to the text, but it does not seem that such a status should be granted without other strong supporting arguments. Coyle himself states that these 'added' passages play a quite understandable role in their context, they 'highlight the surrounding theme by showing the role of each of the Persons of the Trinity in the moral life of Man' and 'offset ... the Manichaeans ... proclaimed ... worship of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.³⁸ Coyle supports his contention of later insertion by arguing that in the beginning of *mor. ecc.* 14.24, 'there is a noticeable departure, manifest in the manner in which he cites Rom. 11: 36, to positively assert God's triune nature (lines 435-440)'.³⁹ This was noted in chapter 3 (p. 110-111 and n. 304); but it was suggested that the reason for such a 'departure' from earlier writings may have been the catechetical teaching which Augustine received at Milan, in preparation for baptism, to which he refers in *On the Greatness of the Soul*⁴⁰ (written during the same time as the Roman draft of *mor. ecc.*). Augustine memorized trinitarian *formulae*, which were stressed by Ambrose, during his Christian initiation for baptism in 387 and even though he did not employ Romans 11.36 in any of his earlier works, Augustine was certainly familiar with Romans and appears to have studied the epistle with great care while at Cassiciacum and even before at Milan.⁴¹

In his 'Excursus: The Source for the Digression on the Triune God' (p. 241-259), Coyle also comments on 'The sudden introduction of the Wisdom passages,⁴² which we find only in the trinitarian sections, and the confident manner in which he compares Old and New Testament passages on such a difficult subject as God's triune nature'. These 'cannot do otherwise than make us suspect, not only outside influences, but outright borrowings'.⁴³ This claim may well be valid, but need such 'borrowing'

³⁷ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 241 (cf. 276-283, for corresponding text of *mor. ecc.* from Coyle).

³⁸ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 242.

³⁹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 245.

⁴⁰ 'I prefer to use the very words by which these things were taught me' (*quant.* 34.77; see ch. 3 n. 67 for text); cf. *quant.* 33.76 and 34.78.

⁴¹ *Acad.* 2.2.5; and before his conversion (*conf.* 7.21.27; 8.6.14; 8.12.29-30). The scripture citations in Appendix C, Table 18 (see n. 10) demonstrate Augustine's familiarity with Romans.

⁴² see the discussion of these passages in Appendix C as well as Table 18 for their emergence in *mor. ecc.*

⁴³ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 251. Coyle investigates possible sources which may have been 'borrowed' by Augustine, specifically focusing on Ambrose and Didymus: e.g. 'Besides the scattered nature of his passages, Ambrose is further from Augustine than is Didymus in other important respects: he avoids the term *in(con)uertibilitas*; he avoids the *creatura/deus* contrast, making it one of *Spirit/creature*, without bothering to mention the Spirit's consubstantiality. In fact, nearly all of the points of similarity between Ambrose and Augustine can be explained by a common

have occurred in Africa? In fact, Augustine had read various 'writings of the church' (e.g. *quant.* 34.78)⁴⁴ by 388 and some of these were probably by Ambrose.⁴⁵ In general, it seems quite possible that this addition too could have taken place in Rome or that sufficient information was present to Augustine to account for this section being written at Rome. Ultimately, while I have adopted Coyle's interpretation of the chronological details generally (including his view on the Trinitarian sections) in the body of the thesis, I have done so in deference to his greater expertise and critical feel for the text and in order that the readings given lean more conservatively in their conclusions. The exclusion of the 'later' *mor. ecc.* passages does not eliminate any of the significant ecclesiological developments in Augustine's thought about the church revealed by the writings at Rome.⁴⁶

4. Chronological References Summary: In general, ch. 3, p. 68-72 and Table 2; ch. 4, p. 136-137 and Table 4; and ch. 5, p. 187-188 and Table 5 outline the chronology employed in the thesis argument. More specific comments have been made on the:

- a. *Dialogues* in ch. 1 n. 25;
- b. *libri disciplinarum* in ch. 2, p. 31-32 (cf. n. 34-35);
- c. *quant.* in ch. 2, p. 44 (cf. Table 2);
- d. *mor. ecc.* (and *mor. Man.*) in ch. 2, p. 44 and n. 117; ch. 3, p. 70-72; Tables 2 and 4;
- e. *lib. arb.* in ch. 3, p. 70 n. 36; ch. 4 n. 12; and Tables 2 and 4;
- f. *Gn. a. Man.*⁴⁷ in ch. 4, p. 142 n. 76; and Tables 2 and 4;
- g. *mag.* in ch. 4, p. 137 n. 39 (cf. Table 4);
- h. *diu. qu.* in ch. 4, p. 137 n. 38 and Tables 4 and 5;
- i. *mus.* in ch. 5, p. 189-190 n. 23 (cf. n. 20) and Table 5;
- j. *uera rel.* in ch. 5, p. 187 n. 8 (cf. Table 5).

borrowing from Didymus [*De spiritu sancto*]. The only exception is the phrase (*per*)*manere semper*; and Augustine might have heard this in a sermon of Ambrose without having read his *De spiritu sancto* (p. 255, cf. 253) (Coyle's gives Ambrose's *Isaac* 7.79 as an example here (cf. *beata u.* 2.11 and Coyle, 255 n. 968; 359-360; and, for text, 269 ln. 84-88). Coyle continues, 'Ambrose draws a little nearer to Augustine in the matter of Scriptural citations – but not much' (p. 255). He then goes on to make ten points about Augustine's use of scripture in *mor. ecc.* in comparison to Ambrose and Didymus (p. 255-258). The result of these discussions is that 'Ambrose cannot be entirely discounted as a possible source' for Augustine in the writing of *mor. ecc.* This is representative of Coyle's detailed work on possible 'borrowings', but, as he admits (p. 258-259), nothing certain emerges and the point here is simply that any such borrowings could have as easily taken place in Rome as in Africa.

⁴⁴ *Nam cum sint ista per tam multas ecclesiae scripturas dispersa.* CSEL 89. 228.

⁴⁵ a possible source listed by Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 251-259 (see above, n. 43)), cf. *sol.* 2.14.26 and ch. 1, p. 15-16. On the influence of Ambrose more generally see ch. 2, p. 53f. (esp. 60-64) and ch. 3, p. 86f. (esp. 102-110).

⁴⁶ though, naturally, the inclusion of these passages would re-emphasize some of the elements presented in chapter three.

⁴⁷ recently both H. Chadwick and J. Rist have stated that *Gn. a. Man.* was written in 388-389 (see Chadwick, *Confessions* (1991), xxiv n. 3; and cf. J. Rist, *Augustine* (1994), xvii).

APPENDIX B

WORD STUDIES OF AUGUSTINE'S EARLY WRITINGS (386-391)

INTRODUCTION

In order to identify, clarify, and supplement significant points and progressions in the development of Augustine's early understanding of the church discussed in the thesis, I have used the CETEDOC CD-ROM of the *Library of Christian Latin Texts* (1991) to trace the occurrences of a number of words in the treatises he wrote before journeying to Hippo in 391.¹ Various groups of words were selected that could provide information about Augustine's theological and ecclesiological progress between his conversion in 386 and entry into the priesthood in 391.² The use of these terms in each work from the period was then traced and the results tabulated in Part 1 (see Tables 8-17). These tables include all of Augustine's pre-clerical treatises.³ Brief commentary on the results and each term (following the order in the tables) is given in Part 2.

PART 1: TABULATED RESULTS:⁴

¹ i.e. *Acad.*, *beata u.*, *ord.*, *sol.*, *imm. an.*, *quant.*, *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.*, *lib. arb.* (bk. 1, but maybe up to 2.16.43; see n. 6 below), *Gn. a. Man.*, *mag.*, *mus.*, and *uera rel.* Some searches have included *qu. 1-50* of *diu. qu.* (see n. 7 in Table 8). '*Lib. arb.*' in the commentary text indicates sections through 2.16.43.

² the groups are: 1. those terms which seem to have an obvious ecclesial connection (such as *ecclesia* or *presbyter* or *baptisma*); 2. terms which are distinctively Christian (such as *christus* or *euangelium*) and thus provide a background for Augustine's advancing ecclesial understanding as well as insight into the broader theological development which he experienced; 3. terms which provide the same kind of insight as those in the previous group but are not necessarily Christian, though used by Augustine with Christian meaning (e.g. *auctoritas*, *religio*); 4. terms which may have a 'monastic' or ascetic connection (e.g. *ieiunium*) or which define the Christian life (e.g. *pietas*); 5. terms which refer to worship; and 6. a group of different words for 'love'.

Several miscellaneous terms, such as *philosophia* or *otium*, have been included in the last table out of interest and to serve for contrast. Significant terms which were searched for but which did not appear in any of the treatises (e.g. *symbolum*, *clericus*) are noted in the text but not in the tables.

³ studies in Augustine's epistles, however, were not conducted due to present limitations in the CETEDOC CD-ROM; cf. also n. 7.

⁴ generated by the CETEDOC CD-ROM's *Library of Christian Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols 1991); which consists mainly of texts from the *CCL* with some additional texts from the *CSEL* and *PL* (it does not yet include some recent relevant texts from the *CSEL*, specifically volumes 89 and 90,

Table 8: Terms relating to the church, Part One

Works\Dates	<i>eccles</i> * ⁵	<i>bapti</i> *	<i>catholic</i> *	<i>congreg</i> *	<i>sacrament</i> *	<i>catechum</i> *
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386				1		
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386				1		
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386				1		
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						
<i>quant.</i> 388	3		1			
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	11	1	16	1	3	2
<i>lib. arb.</i> ⁶ (bk. 1) 388						
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389	4		8	2		
<i>diu. qu.</i> ⁷ 388-391					1 (36, 43)	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	12	3	6	14	5	
<i>mag.</i> 388-390						
<i>mus.</i> ⁸ 387-390	1 (bk. 6)		1 (bk. 6)		1 (bk. 6)	
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	13	1	15		11	

containing *sol.*, *imm. an.*, *quant.*, *mor. ecc.*, and *mor. Man.* respectively); see n. 38 for explanation of search criteria.

⁵ excluding non ecclesial forms, *ecclesiasticus*, etc. (see n. 38 for search form explanations).

⁶ see ch. 3 n. 36 for references on the chronology of *lib. arb.* Since there is disagreement over whether Augustine completed only book one at Rome, or perhaps as much as through 2.16.44, I have given the counts for terms in book one regularly and included terms from the appropriate sections of bk. 2 in '[]'.

⁷ only some searches include *diu. qu.* 1-50. In general, searches done for this work did not add much to the picture created by the overall tabulation. Searches that were not done are marked in the tables with an '*' in the appropriate box. Where studies have been done and results noted for questions 1-50 the number of occurrences appears followed in '()' by the question number in which they were found.

⁸ in certain cases the breakdown of occurrences between bk. 1-5 and bk. 6 has been noted (by giving a subtotal for bk. 6 in parentheses). The first number is the *total* count.

Table 9: Terms relating to the church, Part Two

Works/Dates	<i>episcop*</i> , <i>presb*</i> , <i>diacon*</i>	<i>haeret*</i> (<i>h(a)eres*</i>)	<i>Manichae*</i>	<i>schismat*</i>	<i>martyr*</i>	<i>pale*(a)</i> (<i>zizani*</i>)
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386						
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386						
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386						
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						
<i>quant.</i> 388						
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	2, 3, 1	4 (1) ⁹	8		2	2 (2)
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388					1	
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389	4, 2	(4)	10			
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		*	*		*	*
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389		13 (2)	22			(1)
<i>mag.</i> 388-390						
<i>mus.</i> 387-390		2				
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391		7 (4)	1	6	1	4 (1)

⁹ citing 1 Cor. 11.19.

Table 10: Significant Christian terms, Part One

Works\Dates	<i>trinita*</i>	<i>patr*+fili* +spirit*</i>	<i>christ*¹⁰</i>	<i>spirit*+ sanct*</i>	<i>prouident* (+ diuin*)</i>	<i>christian*</i>
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386			1		3 (1)	
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386	1					
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386		1	6	1	4 (1)	
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						
<i>quant.</i> 388					2 (1)	
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	1	1	25	13	5 (4)	19
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388			4		6 [5] (3) [(1)]	
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389			10	3	2 (1)	3
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391					*	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389			30	2	4 (1)	3
<i>mag.</i> 388-390			5			
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	1		3		4 (3)	2
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	5	3	9	6	21 (20)	14

¹⁰ not including forms of *christianus*, for which see the final column here.

Table 11: Significant Christian terms, Part Two

Works\Dates	<i>apostol</i> *	<i>auctorita</i> *	<i>credo/cred</i> *	<i>fides/em/etc</i> (<i>fidelis/em/etc</i>)	<i>disciplin</i> *	<i>doctrin</i> *
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386	1	12	34	9	13	5
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386		3	11	2 (1)	1	1
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386		14	42	5 (1)	29	2
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387		1	61	14 (4)	52	
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387			4		15	
<i>quant.</i> 388	1	5	41	3	31	2
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	28	19	15	15 (10)	22	2
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388	1	3 (3)		4 (6) [(1)]	14	1
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389	12	5	10	6	6	
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		2 (46) 5 (48)	1 (47) 2 (23)	*	1 (36, 38, 45, 48, 49) 2 (35)	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	34	1	39	18 (1)	5	4
<i>mag.</i> 388-390	5	22	32	3	4	2
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	4	7	25	1 (bk. 6)		
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	3	14	36	16 (2)	10	4

Table 12: Terms relating to scripture

Works/Dates	<i>myster*</i>	<i>scriptur*</i>	<i>euangel*</i>	<i>testament*</i> ¹¹	<i>propheta/ am/es/etc</i>	<i>templ*</i>
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386	2					
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386	1					
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386	5	1				
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387						
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						
<i>quant.</i> 388	1	2			4	
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	4	23	8	35 (10) [22] ¹²	14	1
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388			(1)		(1)	
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389		3	2			
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		1 (45)			*	*
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	3	28	8	14 (3) [11]	7	1
<i>mag.</i> 388-390					2	3
<i>mus.</i> 387-390		5 ¹³ (bk. 6)		1 (bk. 6)	2	
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	1	8	2	5 (2)	3	6

¹¹ the plain number stands for counts of 'testament*', the number in '()' counts occurrences of 'nouum/i/etc+testament*', and '[]' indicates counts of 'uetus/ueteris/etc+testament*'.
¹² there are also two occurrences of the conjunction of *uetus/ueteris/etc* and *lex* in both *mor. ecc.* and *uera rel.*
¹³ three times with *diuina*, once with *sancta*, and once with no Christian meaning.

Table 13: Terms relating to the Christian life

Works/Dates	<i>religio/ religion* (+uera)</i>	<i>medicin*¹⁴</i>	<i>pieta*</i>	<i>paenit*</i>	<i>superbi* (humilita*)¹⁵</i>	<i>oro/ora*</i>
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386	3		1	2	1	11
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386		1		1	1	4
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386	1	5	2		1 (1)	12
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387		5				8
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						
<i>quant.</i> 388	(3)	2	3			4
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	9 (2)	6	2		4 (1)	9
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388		1 [1]	3		1	
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389	3 (1)	4	1			3
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391	1 (36) 2 (46) 5 (31) ¹⁶	*			*	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	2		2		17 (1)	1
<i>mag.</i> 388-390	1	1	3			30
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	1 (bk. 6)		1		9 (bk. 6)	29
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	31 (3)	7	3	4	13 (4)	1

¹⁴ search criteria: *medicin**, *medicamen**, *medicamin**, *medicus/um/etc* (excluding forms of *medicor* or *medeor*).

¹⁵ there are no occurrences of *humiles/em/etc* in the treatises.

¹⁶ this 'question' is a virtually verbatim quote of Cicero's *De inuent.* 2.33.159-55.167 (*cf. retr.* 1.26). Elsewhere in the tables it will be marked with a '*'.

Table 14: Terms relating to the ascetic life

Works\Dates	<i>continen*</i>	<i>pater/patr*</i>	<i>frater/fratr*</i>	<i>ieiuni*</i>	<i>seru*+deus/ um/etc</i> ¹⁷	<i>seru*+christ* (seru* + domin*)</i>
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386	1	26	4			
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386		4	1	1		
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386	1	8	1			
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387		2			1	(1)
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387	2	4				
<i>quant.</i> 388	4				1 ¹⁸	(1) ¹⁹
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	7	13	10	4	4 ²⁰	1 ²¹ (2) ²²
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388	3 [1]	[2]	1			
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389	4	1	14		1 ²³	1 ²⁴
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391						
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	2	17		1	[1] ²⁵	
<i>mag.</i> 388-390						
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	1	5	1		4 (bk. 6) ²⁶	(1 in bk. 6)
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391		13	2		4 ²⁷	1 (3) ²⁸

¹⁷ all results were screened to yield only the direct connections noted in the table.

¹⁸ citing Mt. 4.10; in addition to an indirect connection in *quant.* 34.78 (*in cuius seruitio placere perfecta et sola libertas est.* CSEL 89. 227).

¹⁹ citing Mt. 4.10.

²⁰ two to these are scriptural citations of Mt. 6.24 and Dt. 6.13.

²¹ citing Gal. 1.10.

²² both scripture citations: Mt. 6.24; Dt. 6.13.

²³ citing Rom. 14.18.

²⁴ citing Rom. 14.18.

²⁵ *praeceptum Dei seruare* (*Gn. a. Man.* 2.26.38).

²⁶ one of these reads: *dei nutibus seruiens* (*mus.* 6.17.57), another is a quote of Rom. 7.25.

²⁷ in addition to an indirect connection in *uera rel.* 16.32.

²⁸ two of which are biblical citations: Mt. 4.9-10 and 6.24.

Table 15: Terms relating to the ascetic life or to love

Works\Dates	<i>lecti</i> *	<i>castus/um/etc</i> , <i>castita</i> *, <i>castiss</i> * ³⁰	<i>amor</i> *	<i>dilig</i> */ <i>dilex</i> * ²⁹	<i>c(h)arita</i> *	<i>fid</i> *+ <i>spe</i> *+ <i>c(h)arita</i> *
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386		2	4	1	1	
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386		4	2		1	1
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386			7	21	1	1
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387		13	4	6	8	4
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387			2			
<i>quant.</i> 388			4		2	
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	1	12	36	41	44	
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388		[1]	6	9		[1]
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389		4		1	2	
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		*		1 (31,* 35) 2 (36)	1 (35, 46) 6 (36)	*
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389		5	3	7	9	1
<i>mag.</i> 388-390				2		
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	1	2	6	10	4	
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391			8	71	11	2

²⁹ excluding forms of *dilectio*, *diligentia*, and *diligens*.³⁰ excluding derivatives of *castro* or *castellum*.

Table 16: Terms relating to worship

Works\Dates	<i>uener*</i> (<i>uenerati*</i>) ³⁴	<i>confess*</i> , ³¹ <i>confite*</i> (<i>confessio*</i>)	<i>ador*</i> ³²	<i>cult*</i> ³³	<i>colo/colu*/</i> <i>cole*</i> ³⁵	<i>praedic*</i>
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386	1	13 (2)			1	
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386	1	3 (1)			1	
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386	3 (1)	4		1		1
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387	2	4				
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387	1					
<i>quant.</i> 388	5	7	1		3	1
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.	1	3	3	2	8	8
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388		3 [4] (1)			[1]	
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389		4				15
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		*		2 (31*)	1 (43)	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389	2	2 (1)	1	2	5	6
<i>mag.</i> 388-390		5		1		
<i>mus.</i> 387-390	2	10 (1 in bk. 6)			1	4 (2 in bk. 6)
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	3 (1)	3	5	13	33	5

³¹ the table gives results in '()' for forms of *confessio*; such forms are not included in the main number, which reflects other, primarily verbal, forms.

³² only derivatives of *adoro*; forms of other words like *ador*, *-oris* etc have been screened out.

³³ occurrences represent only those usages where *cultus* and its derivatives refer to worship or worshipers (*i.e.* has a religious and not agrarian connotation).

³⁴ not *uenerab**, *uenerere**, or *uenerari**.

³⁵ all resultant forms were checked to ensure that tables record derivatives only of *colo*.

Table 17: Miscellaneous terms, 386-391

Works\Dates	<i>orthodo</i> *	<i>otium/i/etc</i>	<i>philosoph</i> *	<i>plato</i> * (<i>platonic</i> *)	<i>spirit(u)al</i> *	<i>animal</i> *
<i>Acad.</i> Nov. 386		4	66	11 (5)		1
<i>beata u.</i> Nov. 386			10			
<i>ord.</i> Nov./Dec. 386		2	28			8
<i>sol.</i> winter 386/387		4	1	1		6
<i>imm. an.</i> ea. spring 387						5
<i>quant.</i> 388		1	1			28
<i>mor. ecc.</i> 387/388–Rome 388/389–N.Af.			3			
<i>lib. arb.</i> (bk. 1) 388		[1]				1 [1]
<i>mor. Man.</i> 388-389						39
<i>diu. qu.</i> (1-50) 388-391		*			*	
<i>Gn. a. Man.</i> 388-389		2			37	23
<i>mag.</i> 388-390					2	17
<i>mus.</i> 387-390		1 (bk. 6)			3 (bk. 6)	7 (4 in bk. 6)
<i>uera rel.</i> 390/ea. 391	1	4	5	3 (2)	16	11

PART 2: COMMENTARY:

The intention in this summary commentary has not been to provide exhaustive discussions of the various terms or even necessarily to comment on *how* they are used generally and in different writings.³⁶ The less ambitious aim has been simply to note

³⁶ there are many problems and limitations with simple tabulations of word frequency; certainly, it has not been possible to consider the context for each appearance. Moreover, comments based upon frequency are by nature subject to random factors such as subject matter and genre. I have tried to evaluate as many of the terms in context as practicable and avoid non-relevant occurrences, but in general the results and interpretations given are provisional and supplementary to the arguments found in the thesis. Certain limitations highlighted by the results themselves are noted in the commentary.

the emergence of significant terms or patterns of emergence and development of such terms. The possible implications of such developments have been noted and generally support the conclusions of this thesis. More subtle discussions of various terms are presented in the body of the thesis in appropriate chronological context. References to these discussions and to literature on the different terms are noted in the commentary.³⁷

The first group of terms (see Tables 8 and 9) are those which have fairly clear ecclesial relevance.

ecclesia (eccles)*:³⁸ Of obvious importance for any understanding of Augustine's ecclesiology, *ecclesia*³⁹ makes its first appearance in *quant.*, where it occurs three times.⁴⁰ This is followed in Augustine's next work, *mor. ecc.*, by 11 occurrences of *ecclesia* (excluding title).⁴¹ The pattern of an ecclesiologically significant term making its appearance first⁴² in *quant.* and then prominently in *mor. ecc.*, or first and prominently in *mor. ecc.* is significant.⁴³ It is also observed for such words

³⁷ articles on particular terms have been culled primarily from H.J. Sieben, *Voces, Bibliographia Patristica: Supplementum I* (1980). Where articles on or relating to these terms have appeared in the *Augustinus-Lexikon*, they have been noted.

³⁸ see n. 5. Words that appear in the tables will be introduced in the commentary in their standard full form (e.g. here '*ecclesia*') followed, in parentheses, by the form(s) that was used in the computer searches to find all the derivatives of the basic form (e.g. here '*eccles**'). An '*' represents any combination of characters in such searches. A '+' indicates that two or more terms were sought for in close proximity, '/' denotes variant endings which were searched for simultaneously, and ',' indicates a logical 'or'. Where a series of standard endings have been entered as the search criteria (e.g. *ecclesia/am/ae/as/etc*), the search form noted in the commentary, as well as the entry in the tables, simply gives the first two forms followed by '/etc'. It is noted in the tables where the results of certain search criteria were more complex or where results had to be checked individually to determine if the right term had been found (e.g. determining if *cultores* referred to worshippers or farmers). Many of the results have been checked manually at some stage. Where nouns are listed as primary entries in the commentary, it is noted if the verb was included in the search criteria.

³⁹ for additional information specifically on this word in Augustine, see the articles by E. Lamirande, W. Kamlati, P. Rinelti, J.C. Plumpe, R. Palmero Ramos listed in H.J. Sieben, *Voces* (1980), 236 and 282-283 (under '*animae ecclesia*', '*ecclesia*', and '*mater ecclesia*').

⁴⁰ cf. CSEL 89. 260 (Index verborum), which identifies: *quant.* 34.77 (*ecclesia catholica*, CSEL 89. 225); *quant.* 34.78 (*multas ecclesiae scripturas dispersa*, 228); and *quant.* 33.76 (*matrem ecclesiam*, 224). The first occurrence in *mor. ecc.* is at 10.16 (*ecclesia catholica*, CSEL 90. 19).

⁴¹ in the text (not the headings) of the commentary, the standard form of each term (here *ecclesia*), or the first of several full forms, also serves to represent all its derivatives (hence, '*baptisma*' in the commentary text includes derivative forms (e.g. *baptismas*) as well as the uses of *baptizo* or *baptizatio* and their derivatives).

⁴² the chronological information does not allow one to specify whether a term in *quant.* or in *mor. ecc.* occurred 'first' (unless, possibly, if the term falls in the sections of *mor. ecc.* which Coyle argues are from Africa; see n. 45). I have generally treated *quant.* first since it was probably the first published and was written entirely at Rome. It also has obvious links to earlier works like *imm. an.* and *sol.* So many of the ecclesiologically significant terms appear first either in *quant.* or *mor. ecc.*, however, that whether a usage (or all the usages) in *quant.* of a particular term is prior to those in *mor. ecc.* is basically irrelevant.

⁴³ it may be that the subject matter alone accounts for the difference. However, it is also possible that the change in frequency of new terms in these two works reflects the expansion of Augustine's ecclesial thinking following the ecclesiastical stimulation of Milan in 387 – expansion into subject areas like the soul on which he had already written, and more purely in an apologetic work that was meant to benefit the church (see discussion following).

as: *baptisma/etc*, *catholicus*, *martyr*, *sacramentum*, *catechumenus/etc*, *haereticus/haeresis*, *episcopus*, *presbyter*, *diaconus*, *adoro*, *christianus*, *propheta*, *euangelium*, (*nouum/uetus*) *testamentum*, and *uera religio*.⁴⁴ This dramatic increase of Christian, and especially ecclesial terminology in 387/388, clearly seen in Tables 8 and 9, indicates a significant point of development. The writings *quant.* and *mor. ecc.*, in which the emergence occurs, come from the interim between Augustine's baptism at Milan and his return to Thagaste in North Africa⁴⁵ (the majority of this interim being spent at Rome). They support the conclusion in chapter three that during this period Augustine was exposed to information about, and took an interest in, the church.⁴⁶ The appearance of some of the terms in this group first in *quant.* (e.g. *mater ecclesia*) and others first in *mor. ecc.* (e.g. *catechumenus*)⁴⁷ further suggests that Augustine's ecclesiological thinking began at or directly after his second stay at Milan in 387 (when he received baptism and instruction under Ambrose) and may indicate that the ecclesial aspect of his thought developed during the period before his return to North Africa.

Another interesting factor is that both *quant.* and *mor. ecc.* contain the phrase *mater ecclesia*,⁴⁸ suggesting that Augustine's understanding of *ecclesia* was already

⁴⁴ the potential significance of the pattern for each of these words is discussed below in the appropriate sections of the commentary. It is also the case that some terms (such as *scriptura*, *apostolus*, *spiritus sanctus*, *praedico*, and *colo*) which occur rarely in earlier works receive renewed attention and enjoy greater frequency in *quant.* and esp. *mor. ecc.*

⁴⁵ included here are those passages which J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 93-98 and 241-259) feels were not written until after Augustine's return to Africa (i.e. sections 1.1, 13.22-14.24, 16.26-18.34, and 31.65-35.80), despite the fact that this breakdown has been provisionally accepted in the thesis. The two-fold justification of this position is: 1. that studies such as this appendix have not allayed my reservations about some of Coyle's arguments for later dates (in favor, for example, of the theory that Augustine's catechetical instruction and familiarity with the creed under Ambrose at Milan in mid-387 and/or the ecclesial and ascetic input at Rome may adequately account for Augustine's rapidly advanced understanding of the church and many of its aspects, terms, beliefs, and structures; cf. Appendix A, p. 272f.); and 2. because in a brief sampling I have not found a significant difference in frequency in these terms between the sections identified by Coyle as questionably Roman and those not so identified (e.g. *euangelium*, see n. 123). I certainly agree that *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* were published after the return to Africa and that additions may have been made to *mor. ecc.* there. However, often the terms in this appendix do not occur in passages dated to North Africa by Coyle, and *quant.* (in which a number of the terms first appear) is generally agreed to have been written at Rome before his return to Africa (indeed, *mor. Man.* could have been drafted at Rome, but I have not pushed this view here). Fundamentally, there is no real need to separate out various sections of *mor. ecc.* in the tables or in this brief commentary on the terms. Where terms only occur in the sections possibly from North Africa, it has been noted.

⁴⁶ at Cassiciacum previously, he had been concerned with Christianity mostly as it pertained to the salvation of the individual (i.e. the *auctoritas christi* which could release him from the grasp of sin and allow him to ascend into spiritual relationship with God).

⁴⁷ as well as the general feature that terms which appear first in *quant.* occur with much greater frequency in *mor. ecc.*, something which may not be due to subject matter alone (e.g. the use of *mater ecclesia* in *quant.* is quite as sophisticated as in *mor. ecc.*; see n. 40 above, and e.g. ch. 3 n. 96).

⁴⁸ e.g. *quant.* 33.76 and *mor. ecc.* 30.64. Indeed, in both of these works Augustine spoke in terms of his *mater ecclesia*. The *mater ecclesia* phrase is also found (once) among the four uses of *ecclesia* in

personal and theological in 387/388. The argument of chapter three for some theological understanding of *ecclesia* shortly after Christian instruction at Milan might also be supported by the association of *ecclesia* with *catholica* (with both titular and universal connotations) in *quant.* and *mor. ecc.* *Ecclesia* appears in nearly all of the remaining works from Augustine's early Christian period (except for *lib. arb.*, *diu. qu.* (qu. 1-50), and *mag.*), most frequently in *Gn. a. Man.*⁴⁹ and *uera rel.*⁵⁰

baptisma/baptizatio/baptizo (bapti)*: As suggested above and argued in chapters two and three, the sudden appearance at Rome in 387/388 in Augustine's writings of terms pertaining to corporate Christianity or to ecclesial structures was probably sparked by his baptism and experience as a catechumen at Milan in 387. The first appearance of *baptisma* (once) in *mor. ecc.* is consistent with this position.⁵¹ Later, *baptisma* occurs three times in *Gn. a. Man.* and once in *uera rel.* In these latter references, however, it is incidental to the discussion.⁵² This does not, however, necessarily weaken the argument that Augustine's own baptism and the events surrounding it brought the new focus of the church to his Christian thought. Indeed, the complete absence of the term *symbolum (symbol*)*⁵³ combined with the rare occurrence of *baptisma* would tie in with Ambrose's comments that both of these ought not to be openly discussed since they were meant only for the faithful.⁵⁴ Hence, the infrequency of this term may be due not only to factors such as subject matter but also to conscious omission.

catholicus (catholic)*: Again, as with many of the other terms that pertain directly to ecclesiology or have a corporate Christian sense, the term/title *catholicus* appears

mor. Man. The implication that the church as the spiritual mother of all believers was among Augustine's first Christian ecclesiological conceptions supports the conclusions of ch. 2 and 3.

⁴⁹ note esp. '*coniux ecclesia*' in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37 (twice, in discussion on Gn. 2.24 with reference to Eph. 5.31-32). The link of *ecclesia* to *uxor* is also found in this passage in connection with scriptural citations, cf. Ps. 3.6 (cf. also the *Gn. a. Man.* 2.13.19 quote of Eph. 5.31-32). Finally, note '*ecclesiam corpus eius*' (referring to Christ, 2.24.37; cf. Col. 1.18; cf. *Gn. a. Man.* 1.23.40). There are three occurrences of *ecclesia* in book one and nine in book two of *Gn. a. Man.*

⁵⁰ appearances break down by chapter as follows: ch. 3 (twice), ch. 4 (once), ch. 6 (3x), ch. 7 (twice), ch. 8 (twice), ch. 10 (once), ch. 25 (once), ch. 28 (once). Also, three of the four plural forms of *ecclesia* are in *uera rel.* and are reflective of a new grasp of the role of local churches (cf. ch. 5 above).

⁵¹ certainly nothing conclusive can be based upon it, however, due to the paucity of the term.

⁵² e.g. in *Gn. a. Man.*, where it occurs once in a quote of Sirach 34.30-31 and in the same passage simply as 'bath'. The only Christian usage is in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37, however, the exact meaning is unclear.

⁵³ J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions* v. 3 (1992), 24 n. 7) observes that 'Poque [*Augustinianum* 25 (1985), 134] notes that Augustine for the most part avoids the word *symbolum* in his writing, except in his own sermons to *competentes*'.

⁵⁴ cf. e.g. Ambrose's *expl. sym.* 9; cf. ch. 3, p. 91-92 and n. 184.

first in *quant.* (once) and then more often in *mor. ecc.* (16 times – excluding title; eight times in *mor. Man.*). In addition to reinforcing the pattern of emergence noted above for *ecclesia*,⁵⁵ the six occurrences of the term in *Gn. a. Man.* are significant for Augustine's use of 'Catholic' as both a descriptive term and title in contradistinction to the Manichees (cf. *haereticus* below). Indeed, except for a reference at the end of *mus.* (6.17.59), after *quant.*, *catholicus* is found only in works addressed towards the Manichees until heavy usage of the term in *uera rel.* (whose audience included but went beyond the Manichees).⁵⁶ *De uera religione* is very much a synthetic work. Written at the end of Augustine's pre-clerical period, it provides a comprehensive statement of his Christian thought within which an early ecclesiological synthesis may be discerned and placed. This discernment is supported by the appearance, often most frequently, in *uera rel.* of almost all of the terms studied here. It is also not unusual for a term to appear in *uera rel.* for virtually the first time since *mor. ecc.* (e.g. *trinitas*, *pater+filius+spiritus (sanctus)*, *adoro*, *martyr*, *philosophia*, *palea*, and *zizania*).

congregatio (congreg)*: Unlike *ecclesia* or *catholicus*, *congregatio* occurs, albeit infrequently, in Augustine's earliest extant writings, being found once in each of the first three Cassiciacum *Dialogues*. In none of these, however, does it have a Christian sense.⁵⁷ The next appearances are in *mor. ecc.* (once) and *mor. Man.* (twice). These are references to a Christian coenobitical community (*mor. ecc.* 31.67) and to gatherings of Manichaeans (*mor. Man.* 22.74).⁵⁸ The abundant use of the term in *Gn. a. Man.* (where it occurs 14 times)⁵⁹ is deceiving. All but one of these occurrences are either from citations of or discussion about Gn. 1.9-10 (the 'gathering' of the waters) and the reference to the 'company of the good' in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.22.34 is a general one. The brief ecclesial use of this term may reflect a word from Augustine's pre-Christian vocabulary taking on a Christian sense and then being superseded by other words (e.g. by *ecclesia*) as his terminology became more Christian.⁶⁰ The disappearance of *congregatio* in the later Thagaste period

⁵⁵ the connection *catholica ecclesia* (first in *mor. ecc.*) was noted above, see *ecclesia*.

⁵⁶ the pattern of greatly increased occurrence of a term in *uera rel.* (sometimes prefaced by occurrences in *mus.* bk. 6) is also apparent for *ecclesia* and in Tables 8, 9, 10, 13, and 16 for: *sacramentum*, *schismaticus*, *trinitas*, (*diuina*) *prouidentia*, *christianus*, *religio*, *cultus*, and *colo*.

⁵⁷ e.g. twice used of the Cassiciacum community; once as a whole (*beata u.* 1.5) and once of the group gathered for disputation (*Acad.* 1.2); cf. also *beata u.* 1.5 and *ord.* 2.19.49.

⁵⁸ one a small number living in a house, the other a group coming together to hear the epistle of Manichaeus.

⁵⁹ *congregatio* is found in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.5 (once); 1.12.18 (12x); and 2.22.34 (once).

⁶⁰ J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 86) describes Augustine's language in *mor. ecc.*, saying, 'he strives for a style that will be both lucid and simple for readers who at any rate do not seem well-versed in Classical literature. In fact, he avoids treating certain subjects on the grounds that the

(especially from *uera rel.*) suggests that it was a term which did not retain much significance for Augustine's early ecclesiology in 390/391.

sacramentum (*sacrament**):⁶¹ As with *baptisma* (and *symbolum*, which is absent from all of the works studied) *sacramentum* is not a dominant term in Augustine's earliest writings. It first occurs in *mor. ecc.* (three times), but from this point it is found more frequently than 'baptism' in the North African works. The emergence of sacramental and technical terms (e.g. *baptisma*, *sacramentum*, *catechumenus*, *episcopus/presbyter/diaconus*) in *mor. ecc.* and not *quant.* may be due simply to subject matter, but it also might hint at a developing interest in and familiarity with information about the church in 387/388. *Sacramentum* figures significantly (11 times) in *uera rel.* This may indicate a growing familiarity with and focus on more general and common ecclesiastical activities, since this term is more general and certainly less 'secret' than these others. Thus, the appearances of *sacramentum* in *mus.* and its increase in *uera rel.* seem to support the claim in chapter five that Augustine became more interested (perhaps involved?) in the sacramental side of the church during 390.⁶²

catechumenus [*chizo/chista/chismus/chesis*] (*catech**): In the pre-clerical period of Augustine's writing, this term appears twice in *mor. ecc.* 35.80.⁶³ This might reflect Augustine's own catechetical experience. One could argue that occurrences of this term, particularly in direct connection with one of the few early references to baptism, might come most naturally at Rome when the catechetical experience of Milan remained fresh in Augustine's mind.⁶⁴ In such a case, it might be indicative not only of Augustine's stimulation by his experience during and after initiatory instruction at Milan in 387/388 to think about certain ecclesial topics, practices, etc.

Manichaeans would be unable to understand them ... This desire for clarity partly explains why we find some twenty definitions in this work; but another reason seems to be that, in some cases at least, Augustine himself is still becoming accustomed to familiar words now seen in a Christian perspective'.

⁶¹ see B. Studer, "'Sacramentum & Exemplum' chez s. Augustin", *Rech. Aug.* 10 (1975), 87-141, and F. Van der Meer, "'Sacra" chez Augustin", *La Maison Dieu* 13 (1948), 50-64; as well as entries for A. Mandouze, 'A propos de 'sacramentum' chez S. Augustin' in *Mélanges offerts à Christine Mohrmann* (1963), 222-232, and others in H.J. Sieben, *Voces* (1980), 389-390, for more information. Generally, see E. Lamirande, 'Catechumenus', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 788-794.

⁶² see ch. 5, p. 228-231.

⁶³ *Nolite iam dicere, catechumenis licere uti coniugibus, fidelibus autem non licere, catechumenis licere habere pecuniam, fidelibus autem non licere. CSEL 90. 86.* It is worth noting the continuation: *Nam et multi sunt qui utuntur tamquam non utentes. Et illo sacrosancto lauacro inchoatur innouatio noui hominis, ut proficiendo perficiatur in aliis citius, in aliis tardius.*

⁶⁴ this is, however, one of the sections which Coyle assigns to North Africa.

but also of how some such broad considerations faded from view.⁶⁵ This thesis has shown that Augustine's increasing understanding and assumption of the role of the Christian teacher played a significant role in his earliest conceptions of the church. However, it seems that the developing emphasis upon the teaching and teachers of the church was not connected to the institution of the catechumenate.⁶⁶

episcopus (episcop)/presbyter (presb*)/diaconus (diacon*)*: All three of these terms of Christian clerical office are found only in *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* (*episcopus* occurs two and four times respectively, *presbyter* three and two times, and *diaconus* occurs once in *mor. ecc.*).⁶⁷ This limited usage suggests that following 387 Augustine was at least basically familiar with church offices and hierarchy, but such positions did not comprise an area of interest for him. The fact that he viewed these positions favorably is seen in his comparison of them in *mor. ecc.* with other positive Christian models in the larger Catholic community such as solitary ascetics and cenobites.⁶⁸ Since these three ecclesiastical terms occurred only during the period when Augustine was *en route* from Milan to Thagaste, or after he had just arrived at Thagaste, it is possible that they reflect his encounters with various church and Christian figures at Rome and Carthage during his travels.⁶⁹ The brief appearance of these terms is consistent with the view that between Milan and Thagaste Augustine actively thought about the church, among other Christian things, but that as or after he settled in Thagaste his general ecclesial thinking abated or, more likely, focused on aspects and patterns of Christian life to which official ecclesiastical elements (like the creed and baptism), clerical positions (such as the three considered here), and institutions (like the catechumenate) were not particularly germane. What is certainly lacking in the latter part of the Thagaste period is any indication of increasing attraction to or interest in clerical positions.⁷⁰ Significantly, terms like *episcopus*, *presbyterus*, *diaconus*, and *clericus* are absent

⁶⁵ occurrence solely (or primarily) in *mor. ecc.* (and also sometimes in *quant.* or *mor. Man.*) is observed for a number of the terms in this group and others.

⁶⁶ E. Kevane supports this view in his 1983 *Saint Augustine Lecture* given at Villanova University (*Catechesis in Augustine* (1989), 9), though he slightly overplays the importance of the catechumenate to Augustine's early Christian development. Still, the lack of involvement with the catechumenate in 387-early 391 does not mean that Augustine was unfamiliar with it or that his references to Christian teaching excluded catechetical instruction (see ch. 5, p. 230-231).

⁶⁷ all are in the sections which may have been added in Africa.

⁶⁸ a comparison (in *mor. ecc.* 31.65-33.73) which itself illustrates that Augustine was observing facts about the corporate body of the universal church and thinking about them in 387/388.

⁶⁹ cf. e.g. *ciu.* 8.22, see CCL 48.2. 816f.

⁷⁰ a fact which is also illustrated by the total absence of the term *clericus (cleric*)* (or of forms of *clerus*) during the period in question (esp. from *uera rel.*, where ecclesiologically and theologically significant terms are generally found with increased frequency) and later affirmed by Augustine's own account of how he was eventually brought into the ranks of the clergy against his will (s. 355.2).

from *uera rel.* In general, this work uses Christian terms with increased frequency (e.g. *ecclesia*, *catholicus*, *haereticus*) or contains significant new Christian and ecclesial terms (e.g. *schismaticus*). Broadly, the minimal employment of clerical terms is consistent with the perspective that while Augustine came to greater understanding and proximity to the church over the period at Thagaste, he did not gravitate towards official ecclesiastical positions.

In addition to terms for the church or its structures, others denote ecclesiastical categories. These illuminate Augustine's awareness of groupings in and outside the church as well as the manner in which his ecclesial vocabulary developed.

haereticus (*haeret**), *Manichaeus/ei* (*Manichae**), and *schismaticus* (*schismat**): These three significant terms have been studied together. *Haereticus* and *Manichaei*, like many of the words discussed, are first found in *mor. ecc.* (four and eight times, respectively). This is not surprising in what became the first of two books against the Manichees. It is perhaps noteworthy that *haereticus* is not found in *mor. Man.* while *h(a)eresis* is – possibly illustrating Augustine's desire as a true rhetor, especially in one of his first works against his former sect, not to alienate his audience and thus to win more of them over to his position.⁷¹ *Haereticus* was used most, however, in *Gn. a. Man.* (13 times, *h(a)eresis* twice); and it is found twice in *mus.* and seven times in *uera rel.* The third term, 'schismatic', though more rare, is perhaps as illuminating. It does not appear at all until *uera rel.* where it occurs six times (only once less than *haereticus*;⁷² *h(a)eresis* occurs four times). Combined with the similar fact that *orthodoxus* (*orthodo**)⁷³ appears only in *uera rel.* (5.9 *ad fin.*) during this period, these terms seem to evidence a growing maturity and subtlety in Augustine's Catholic ecclesial vocabulary in 390. The appearance of *schismaticus* may also reflect the emergence of a new factor that will bear on Augustine's ecclesiology: familiarity with the Donatists.⁷⁴

martyr (*martyr**): This is another specific ecclesiastical label which emerged at Rome in *mor. ecc.* (7.12 and 9.17, both in the Roman draft) and *lib. arb.* (bk. 1). The sole remaining occurrence in the period, in *uera rel.*, does not justify much

⁷¹ e.g. he did not call them 'heretics' though he certainly spoke against 'heresy' (cf. his statements in *mor. ecc.* 1.2; 8.13; and 9.15).

⁷² *Manichaei* appears in *uera rel.* only once, at 5.17. Perhaps this illustrates a feeling that the Manichaeans had been dealt with sufficiently (not least in his own mind) and the fact that he had moved past a simple focus on Catholic as opposed to Manichee to one of Catholic in relation to the world and a number of heretical, schismatic, and (philosophical) pagan threats (cf. esp. *uera rel.* 5.9).

⁷³ see Table 17.

⁷⁴ see ch. 4, p. 163-164 and n. 191 (cf. n. 173); and ch. 5, p. 235 and n. 256.

comment. Yet, it is perhaps noteworthy that the return to Africa apparently did not stimulate greater consideration of the martyrs.⁷⁵

The final two 'ecclesiological' terms to be considered are:

palea (*palea/am/etc*) and *zizania* (*zizani**): Used first in the African portions of *mor. ecc.* (twice in each),⁷⁶ these terms appear only once again before significant (though not abundant) use in *uera rel.*, where one can clearly distinguish an ecclesiological understanding of the parable from Mt. 13.24f.⁷⁷

The next grouping of terms in the tables consists of words which are either explicitly Christian, though not clearly ecclesial, or are not distinctively Christian but are used in a distinctively Christian manner and/or are significant in Augustine's theological development (e.g. *mysterium*). Generally speaking, Christian terminology (such as *christus* or *apostolus*) was present from Augustine's Cassiciacum *Dialogues* onwards, but more corporate Christian terminology⁷⁸ did not emerge until after Milan (387). Progressions and contrasts of certain theological terms are noted as they illuminate Augustine's developing understanding of the church.

trinitas (*trinita**): Along with most of the terms in this group (e.g. *mysterium*, *scriptura*, *apostolus*, *christus*, *disciplina*, *doctrina*, *spiritus sanctus*, *auctoritas*, and *pietas*),⁷⁹ *trinitas* is found in the *Dialogues*⁸⁰ as well as in the following treatises. Also, as with many of these terms, *trinitas* is found most frequently in *uera rel.* (five times). The works of this period demonstrate that the Trinitarian concept was important to Augustine and one which he thought about from his earliest days as a Christian.⁸¹ He began expressing the concept of Trinity with the conjunction of *pater*⁸²+*filius*+*spiritus* (*sanctus*)⁸³ in *ord.* 2.5.16. This formula occurs later only

⁷⁵ greater attention might have been expected, esp. if Augustine regularly associated in common ecclesiastical circles there.

⁷⁶ cf. Appendix C n. 7 for allusions in *mor. ecc.* to the parable in Matthew.

⁷⁷ within a broad conception of the 'church' in God's plan and temporal dispensations; addressed in ch. 5, p. 239 and n. 274 (cf. n. 273); cf. ch. 5 n. 214 (for *uera rel.* 6.10), n. 228 (*uera rel.* 5.8), and n. 270 (*uera rel.* 27.50-28.51).

⁷⁸ like *ecclesia* or *christianus* as opposed to *christus*, for which see the following discussion.

⁷⁹ the only exceptions in the group tabulated being *christianus*; *seruus dei*, and *uera religio*; see Tables 10, 13, and 14.

⁸⁰ it appears at Cassiciacum in *beata. u.* 4.35.

⁸¹ cf. e.g. *ord.* 2.5.16 and *mor. ecc.* 13.22-14.24; 16.26-17.32. The triune nature of God as such, was not very important for Augustine's developing view of the church. The unity of the triune God, however, became significant as the basis of the unity of the church in charity (see ch. 5, p. 234-235).

⁸² the most interesting occurrences of 'pater' and 'deus' in conjunction are in *sol.* 1.1.2. These, in turn, are part of a very lengthy prayer. It would be a worthwhile future study to outline Augustine's early prayers to see what foci and influences are illuminated (searches for *oro/oratio* as 'prayer' were

in *mor. ecc.* (once) and in *uera rel.* (three times) – where it reflects an increased Trinitarian focus in 390 as Augustine's Christian thought generally coalesced into an overall religious synthesis.⁸⁴

deus:⁸⁵ Searches for the various forms of this word thought to be significant (*i.e.* *deus*, *deum*, *dei*, *deo*) revealed a total of over 1400 occurrences. These have not been tabulated, but such a massive number certainly demonstrates the importance and centrality of God to Augustine's pursuit of 'true philosophy/religion' in a period in which he sometimes has been approached with too much stress on philosophy in isolation from religion, cult, or theological terms.⁸⁶

christus (christ)*:⁸⁷ *Christus* appears in Augustine's first extant writings (once in *Acad.* and six times in *ord.*) and then with greatly increased frequency in *mor. ecc.* (25 times). It is present in all the remaining pre-clerical treatises.⁸⁸ Along with *apostolus*, *christus* occurs most often in *mor. ecc.*, *mor. Man.*, and *Gn. a. Man.*; a pattern probably reflective of Augustine's apologetic strategy toward the Manichees since they esteemed Paul,⁸⁹ Christ, and the New Testament (in contrast to the Old).

An interesting comparison may be made between the appearances of *christus* and *christianus*. While *christus* is present in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues*, *christianus* does not occur until *mor. ecc.*, possibly illustrating the fact that, while he thought as a believer in Christ at Cassiciacum (*i.e.* he was trusting in Christ's cleansing work and authority on his behalf), Augustine did not consciously think about himself as a 'Christian' (*i.e.* as part of a large group of united followers of Christ) until after initiation into the church in 387. As detailed in chapters two and three, his Christianity shifted from being primarily personal to being personal and corporate after his second stay in Milan.

spiritus sanctus (spirit+sanct*)*: Augustine's references to the third person of the Trinity as *spiritus sanctus* began in *ord.* 2.5.16. This is, however, the only occurrence of the term until *mor. ecc.*, where it is used 13 times. The large number

abandoned here due to the problems in determining the significant occurrences from the numerous results, *cf.* n. 145 and Table 13).

⁸³ see Table 10.

⁸⁴ *cf.* E. TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (1970), 116f (*cf.* 123f.).

⁸⁵ *deus* is not found in the tables since the search results for it were too numerous to be tabulated.

⁸⁶ a modern separation; J.J. O'Donnell (*e.g.* *Confessions* v. 1 (1992), xxvii-xxx) notes this occasional tendency; *cf.* also J. Rist, *Augustine* (1994), 5-6.

⁸⁷ not including forms of *christianus*, which are discussed below. On 'Christus' in Augustine generally, see G. Madec, *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 845-908.

⁸⁸ by 'treatises' I am excluding *diu. qu.*

⁸⁹ see the comments on *apostolus* below. Occurrences of this term are most often either references to Paul or connected to citations from his epistles.

of occurrences of terms and titles referring to God⁹⁰ in *mor. ecc.* (and to a lesser extent in *mor. Man.*) shows that Augustine's thought patterns had settled into a distinctively Christian orbit by 388; it may also support the idea that this settling was the result of a period of intense consideration of new Christian stimuli. The 'Holy Spirit' is so called in *mor. Man.* (three times), *Gn. a. Man.* (twice), and *uera rel.* (six times), but an understanding of the third member of the Trinity was not a focus of attention for Augustine in 388-391, nor was it directly relevant to his progressing ecclesiological framework.

(diuina) prouidentia (prouident* (+diuin*)): After *deus*, this phrase was Augustine's preferred term for God in his early writings. *Prouidentia* appears 58 times, 36 times in conjunction with *diuina*. These terms are used with considerable frequency in writings throughout 386-391; and, with the previous terms, the marked increase in *uera rel.* may reflect the coherence of an early doctrine of God.

christianus (christian*):⁹¹ As indicated above (see *christus*), *christianus* is first used in *mor. ecc.* Along with *christus* and *spiritus sanctus*, it is also used with the greatest frequency in *mor. ecc.* Its use supports previous observations that Augustine's stay at Rome in 387/388 was a time of active Christian exploration when many ideas were broached for the first time and certain ones received detailed consideration.⁹² The centrality of *mor. ecc.* for this and other terms is consistent with the progression of ecclesial thought outlined in the thesis, namely, that out of the ferment at Rome certain ideas condensed into a theological mindset from which Augustine's religious practice flowed upon return to North Africa. There, his developing religious and theological life, in community with other similarly advancing *christianae* (albeit not, perhaps, as quickly), led to the coalescence in 390/91 of his Christian life and thought into a first comprehensive understanding and a firm vocational direction.

apostolus (apostol*):⁹³ Used once in Augustine's first extant work, *Acad.*, *apostolus* occurs most often in *mor. ecc.* (28 times),⁹⁴ *mor. Man.* (12 times), and

⁹⁰ e.g. *deus*, *christus*, and *spiritus sanctus*.

⁹¹ see the articles by E. Lamirande and P. de Labriolle listed in H.J. Sieben, *Voces* (1980), 251. See also E. Lamirande's 'Christianus (christianismus, christianitas)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 842-845.

⁹² e.g. the problem of evil in *mor. Man.* As noted in the body of the thesis, after *mor. ecc.*, not until 390/391 in the writing of *uera rel.* did Augustine interact with the Christian faith again so comprehensively.

⁹³ E. Feldmann, 'Apostolus (apostolatus)', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 3 (1988), 395-406.

⁹⁴ one of these, in *mor. ecc.* 33.72, is a reference to Mani.

Gn. a. Man. (34 times), and to a lesser extent in the subsequent works at Thagaste. As noted, this pattern suggests that Augustine employed his own experience with the Manichees to address them most effectively from his new Catholic position. Tactical usage of apostolic (especially Pauline)⁹⁵ authority also sheds light on the sensitivities of the new Catholic Augustine, coming from a Manichee background. Specifically, the care with which he would have read the Apostle Paul after becoming a Christian should not be underestimated.⁹⁶

auctoritas (auctorita)*:⁹⁷ Augustine's statement in *Acad.* to Romanianus that 'I have fixed my mind to depart on absolutely no occasion from the authority of Christ; for I perceive none stronger' (*Acad.* 3.20.43)⁹⁸ illustrates how important the term *auctoritas* was for the young Christian Augustine. Indeed, it occurs 30 times in the works from Cassiciacum and is found in every treatise from the pre-clerical period.⁹⁹ Conjunctions of *auctoritas* (e.g. with *ecclesia*, *christus*, or *apostolus*) were examined as a possible gauge of Augustine's understanding of authority in relation to the church. *Auctoritas* is found in proximity to *ecclesia* three times in *mor. ecc.*, but not in direct connection, and once in *uera rel.* The conjunction between *apostolus* and *auctoritas* does occur (see *mor. ecc.* 33.70; *mag.* 5.14; 5.15 (twice); and, indirectly, *uera rel.* 10.20). There are also five uses of 'authority' and 'Christ' in close proximity. More often than any of these, however, the word (and concept) of 'authority' is found in conjunction with scripture. This could not be properly tabulated since it is often reflected not by direct association of *auctoritas* with the various terms for the scriptures (such as *scriptura*, *euangelium*, *testamentum*, etc. – though this certainly happens; e.g. *mor. ecc.* 21.39 with *noui testamenti*, or *mor. ecc.* 9.14 with *ueteris testamenti*) but rather by a connection directly to the passage cited.¹⁰⁰

credo (credo/cred)*: Among the most frequent of the terms tabulated, *credo* was used in each work from the period 386-391 except *lib. arb.* (occurring ten times or more in all of these save *imm. an.*). Moreover, the frequency with which *credo*

⁹⁵ cf. esp. *mor. ecc.* 8.13. From CSEL 63 (194); 89 (233); and 90 (162) it appears that 'Paul' (*Paulus*) was referred to twice in the *Dialogues*, once in *quant.*; 21 times in *mor. ecc.*, and twice in *mor. Man.* It occurs most often in conjunction with *apostolus*.

⁹⁶ see e.g. *Acad.* 2.2.5; cf. Appendix C n. 15.

⁹⁷ see J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 89; and K.-H. Lütcke, 'Auctoritas', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 4 (1990), 498-510.

⁹⁸ see ch. 1 n. 34 for Latin.

⁹⁹ except *imm. an.*, which Augustine himself described as an unfinished draft (cf. *retr.* 1.5.1). Interestingly, *auctoritas* is very frequent in *mag.* but virtually absent from *Gn. a. Man.*, showing that the frequency of terms does not always proceed in line with the expectations created by subject matter.

¹⁰⁰ cf. *mor. ecc.* 29.61 *ad fin.*

occurs does not seem to change. This heavy employment is due in part to uses without Christian connection.¹⁰¹ Yet, although in 386-391 Augustine's concerns are sometimes more abstractly philosophical, in the modern sense of the word, his use of *credo* suggests a perceived need for faith or belief as a basis for understanding during these years.

fides (fides/em/etc):¹⁰² Not so common as *credo*, *fides* is nevertheless found in each of the pre-clerical works save *imm. an.* As with *credo*, there is no real change in its frequency over the period, reinforcing the ongoing importance of faith to Augustine's experience and understanding as a Christian. The related term, *fidelis (fidelis/em/etc)* is also found in writings from Cassiciacum, Milan, Rome, and Thagaste, but not so often as *fides* or *credo* (greatest use is in *mor. ecc.*, 10 times).

It has been shown elsewhere in the thesis (see esp. ch. 2 and 3) that teaching was of central importance to Augustine's actions and view of the church as a young Christian. This concept of teaching is illuminated by the connection between the terms:

disciplina (disciplin)*¹⁰³ and *doctrina (doctrin*)*:¹⁰⁴ Augustine used both of these words in situations where a modern writer might use 'doctrine' or 'teaching'. Yet, as can be seen in Table 11, *disciplina* is far more common in the pre-clerical period

¹⁰¹ the limitations of this kind of study are considerable for words like *credo* or *sapientia* or *corpus*, for which the results are so numerous as to be almost meaningless.

¹⁰² in his notes on Augustine's terminology in *mor. ecc.*, J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 90) states that '*fides (credere)*: in *mor. I* is usually employed in the Pauline sense of assent to things unseen ... or in the sense of assent to the *catholica disciplina*'. See also ch. 2 n. 9 above.

¹⁰³ see the entries listed in *Voces* (1980), 276-277, by V. Morel and others. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 90, provides a helpful summary of the use of *disciplina* in *mor. ecc.*: 'at times [it] retains its meaning of "learning" or "the process of becoming acquainted with" something in that operation of the mind which precedes knowledge. ... Elsewhere it means "self-control" (as in line 132) or even "correction" (= *censura*, as in lines 922 and 1051). But most of the time we find Augustine joining the word to *catholica*, to mean "the Church's system of teachings and practices" ... Only in this *catholica disciplina* can true Christian belief and moral practice be found (lines 589-592), because this *disciplina* alone is based on that of the Apostles (lines 25-56)'.

¹⁰⁴ H.-I. Marrou has made a number of very helpful points in the important article, "Doctrina" et "Disciplina" dans la langue des pères de l'église', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 9 (1931), 5-25. This article begins by noting that *doctrina* and *disciplina* are in certain cases virtually synonymous (both carry sense of 'enseignement' – or instruction, teaching, precept, etc – and both can refer to a specific discipline or art (p. 6). However, Marrou notes that *doctrina* has a character more strictly intellectual than *disciplina* (p. 9, cf. p. 10: 'c'est l'ensemble des connaissances acquises par l'esprit, la science, ou la culture' (cf. *doctr. chr.* 1.2.2)). *Disciplina* does not have such a purely intellectual character. Marrou considers that it has a 'much more rich sense/meaning than *doctrina*' (p. 10), explaining that it represents not only 'enseignement' but also 'education' with both intellectual and moral/practical connotations. In philosophical terms, *doctrina* designates the opinions, theories, 'enseignement' from a more abstract perspective (p. 11 and 15). *Disciplina*, on the other hand, is that which 'in the enseignement' is oriented towards the practical, such as moral rules or the attitude with which to pursue a course of life (p. 11-12).

than *doctrina*.¹⁰⁵ *Disciplina* had more areas of meaning for Augustine such as with the *liberales disciplinae*.¹⁰⁶ Most importantly for this thesis, however, *disciplina* is also much more often used of Christian instruction and teaching than *doctrina*.¹⁰⁷ This preference may highlight a commitment to a unity of thought and life since *disciplina* carries not only the sense of a system of teaching but also the idea of the practice of such a system.¹⁰⁸ In Augustine's use of this term, an integrative sense of 'doctrine' and life is present. Though *disciplina* drops somewhat in frequency after Augustine returned to North Africa,¹⁰⁹ its considerable appearance, especially before returning, gives some insight into his understanding of the Christian ideas and practices with which he was engaged.¹¹⁰ Augustine's Christian meditations were not just of intellectual concern to him but rather provided a real, and holistic, path to truth, embracing both of the modern concepts of theory and practice. His earliest Christianity was quite optimistic, *i.e.* presented confidently as a way of life that would bring him immediately into close communion with the one true God in

¹⁰⁵ this is true in all of the works considered, but the difference is most apparent in the writings at Cassiciacum, Milan, and Rome. *Doctrina* in this period is found only twice in *quant.* 22.40 (as 'learning'/'perception' and as 'knowledge') and in *mor. ecc.* only at 11.19 (twice: as 'instruction' with a sense of system of thought) and 31.67 ('divine learning'/'knowledge'). *Disciplina*, on the other hand, occurs 19 times in *mor. ecc.* (two of these come in quotes from the book of Wisdom, in *mor. ecc.* 16.27) and six times in *mor. Man.* The verb *doceo* appears 11 times in *quant.*

¹⁰⁶ in *mus.*, *disciplina* appears 18 times in bk. 1, more than in the other five books together (wherein it is found twice in bk. 2; 3x in bk. 3; 5x in bk. 4; once in bk. 5; and twice in bk. 6). Yet, in none of these books are there clearly Christian uses of the term (such as *disciplina catholica*).

In light of the important explicitly Christian employment of *disciplina*, such as identified in this thesis and discussed here, and in view of the significant work of Marrou ("Doctrina" et "Disciplina" ..., *ALMA* 9 (1931), 5-25) and, more recently, of J.J. O'Donnell (*Confessions*, v. 1-3 (1992)) and C. Harrison (*Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992)) on *liberales disciplinae*, there is considerable scope for future research which would pay close attention to the uses of *disciplina* in this period in order to examine lines of continuity between Augustine's various early Christian phases (*e.g.* pre-ecclesial (at Cassiciacum) and ecclesial (post Milan, 387)).

¹⁰⁷ cf. n. 103 above; ch. 3 n. 82; and ch. 4 n. 54. Marrou ("Doctrina" et "Disciplina" ..., *ALMA* 9 (1931), 17) notes that *disciplina* and *doctrina* are close in their sense of the dogma of Christian faith: 'for Augustine, catholica disciplina is parallel to doctrina apostolica (see *c. Faust.* 12.45, 46).

¹⁰⁸ the most significant input from Marrou's article, "Doctrina" et "Disciplina" ..., *ALMA* 9 (1931), is the emphasis on the integrative sense of *disciplina* of 'doctrine' with life (p. 17, cf. 18). He notes that often *doctrina* is oriented to theoretical side of 'teaching', and often *disciplina* to the practical side, and gives an example of this from Augustine's early period. Describing Augustine at a point when his thought was still freshly imbued with neo-Platonic philosophy, Marrou states: '*disciplina*, c'est la sagesse envisagée non seulement sous son aspect théorique, mais encore dans ses conséquences pratiques; elle implique une règle de vie' (cf. *ord.* 2.8.25) (p. 18). Marrou observes that the words became more separated in Christian usage than in classical times (p. 12) and that 'eventually *doctrina* leaves the notion of enseignement behind completely and comes to signify the science of divine and human things, la sagesse religieuse' (p. 15, cf. 17).

¹⁰⁹ this is partially due to subject matter (Augustine's use of *disciplina* in the *Dialogues*, for example, often has no explicitly Christian connection (*e.g.* *ord.* 2.20.54), see also *e.g.* of *mus.* references – none are explicitly Christian in 1-6, see n. 106). Still, *disciplina* remained the dominant term for Christian instruction and 'doctrine' in the early writings; *doctrina* was a poor second.

¹¹⁰ cf. ch. 3, p. 73f. See also J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 80. Certainly, Augustine's understanding of the church's teaching was not primarily abstract.

all the wonder of divinity. He was interested in practicing truth, *i.e.* understanding and experiencing it, not just finding it.¹¹¹

In Augustine's use of *disciplina*, there is also the nuance of an ordered and restrained lifestyle.¹¹² For Augustine this was not a constraint; rather, he understood himself to have been released by Christ's work to pursue the pure life which had not been possible before.¹¹³ Herein lie a couple of strands which would find at least partial fulfillment in Augustine's early ascetic and communal ecclesiological focus, especially at Thagaste, and, in particular in the 'monastic' synthesis which emerged shortly before his trip to Hippo in 391.¹¹⁴

The next group of terms pertains to the Christian scriptures.

mysterium (*myster**)¹¹⁵ and *scriptura* (*scriptur**)¹¹⁶: The occurrences of these words reveal developments in Augustine's early usage and understanding of Christian canonical texts. Augustine used *mysterium* to refer to biblical passages¹¹⁷ in the period from his conversion in 386 to his arrival in Rome late in 387.¹¹⁸ But, beginning in *quant.* and *mor. ecc.*, *scriptura* emerged as a more normal general word for denoting the canonical texts. After 387, 'mystery' continued to be used in this way, but not nearly so often as *scriptura*. This may indicate how Augustine's greater awareness of and interest in corporate Christianity had a secondary influence on his vocabulary, stimulating the use of a more specific term in place of a more general one. The great number of appearances of *scriptura* in *mor. ecc.* and *Gn. a. Man.* (51 all together) in contrast to the minimal use of *mysterium* (employed just once in those two works) might hint at Augustine's desire, especially in view of potential Manichaean readers, to use a more concrete term when referring to the sacred texts of Catholic Christians.¹¹⁸

To return to *mysterium*, however, consideration of its occurrences reveals three primary senses in which it was used, namely, to indicate:

¹¹¹ cf. *quant.* 33.75.

¹¹² e.g. *mor. ecc.* 28.55 and 56 (esp. *ad fin.*); cf. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 90. and Marrou, "Doctrina" et "Disciplina" ..., *ALMA* 9 (1931), 20, who notes that *disciplina* often carries sense of 'order' or 'rule'.

¹¹³ e.g. see the presentation of continence in *conf.* 8.9.27.

¹¹⁴ described above in ch. 5.

¹¹⁵ for more information see the article by J. Moràn indicated in H.J. Sieben, *Voces* (1980), 339.

¹¹⁶ its meaning is more general than this, however, including the doctrine and dogma of the church, esp. regarding salvation (see the three primary senses in the following discussion).

¹¹⁷ *scriptura* occurs only once during this interval. On Augustine's use of 'mysteries' at *Acad.* 2.1.1, D.J. Kavanagh (*FC* 5 (1948)) notes that at that time 'Augustine usually employs the terms *mysteria* and *sacra* to designate the Sacred Scriptures'; cf. also *Acad.* 3.20.43.

¹¹⁸ Augustine states that *Gn. a. Man.* was written in a manner to be understood by simple believers (*Gn. a. Man.* 1.1.1-2).

1. the divine, Christian mysteries (especially of salvation);¹¹⁹
2. the scriptures;¹²⁰ and
3. secrets (both generally and those specifically Christian).¹²¹

It is clear that Augustine's view from very early on was principally of a body of saving knowledge for belief. The designation '*alta mysteria*' in three of the four occurrences in *mor. ecc.* perhaps reflects references heard at Milan during his recent initiation into the Christian 'mysteries'.

The move to more specific terms for Christian scriptures is clarified by considering:

euangelium (*euangel**) and (*nouum/uetus*) *testamentum*:¹²² Both of these terms (including 'testament' by itself and with the qualifiers *nouum* and *uetus*) appear first and frequently in *mor. ecc.*¹²³ The abundance of *testamentum* (esp. *uetus testamentum*), in particular, is due to the subject matter of *mor. ecc.* (i.e. defending the Old Testament against Manichee attacks).¹²⁴ The same considerable use of these specific terms for scripture continues (for similar reasons) in *Gn. a. Man.* Yet, they do not appear so frequently in the works from the later Thagaste years. There is certainly evidence of familiarity with the biblical text in these later works,¹²⁵ but the same sense of active (or fresh) engagement with the Bible as in the works from Rome or earlier at Thagaste is lacking.¹²⁶ The significance of scriptural study and familiarity with its terms, events, and passages was certainly not lost, however, following *Gn. a. Man.* (as is made clear by his consistent use,

¹¹⁹ see: *beata u.* 1.4 (tradition of divine mysteries; includes scriptures); *ord.* 2.5.15 (mysteries of the faith; specifically as a vehicle of belief in divine providence); *ord.* 2.5.16 (twice: the mysteries teach that God is one and three); 2.9.27 (spiritual cleansing comes by the authority of the mysteries); 2.5.15 (described as 'sacred mysteries'); *mor. ecc.* 1.1 (same general sense as in *ord.* but linked to ministers of the church and their ability and willingness, or lack thereof, to 'unveil' the Christian mysteries); *mor. ecc.* 24.45 (certainly includes scriptures); *uera rel.* 17.33 (exposition of mysteries; certainly includes scriptures in the context and manifests the connection of scripture as 'sacrament').

¹²⁰ see: *Acad.* 2.1.27 (used as 'scriptures', cf. 1 Cor. 1.24); *mor. ecc.* 12.20 (used of Paul's writings); *mor. ecc.* 19.35 (used of the passages from 1 Tim. and 1 Cor.); *Gn. a. Man.* 2.12.17 (truths of scriptures are 'mysteries and sacraments').

¹²¹ in a non-Christian sense in *Acad.* 3.17.38 ('secrets' of the New Academy); in a Christian sense in *Gn. a. Man.* 1.3.5 (twice: with the idea that the scriptures contain great mysteries), and *Gn. a. Man.* 1.13.19 (secrets of biblical texts).

¹²² see Table 12 n. 11 for the latter's search criteria.

¹²³ e.g. *euangelium* in *mor. ecc.* at 8.13; 9.14; 16.26; 16.28; 18.34; 28.57; 28.58; 29.60.

¹²⁴ cf. *mor. ecc.* 1.1-2.

¹²⁵ e.g. the number and integration of biblical quotations in *uera rel.*

¹²⁶ there may be a connection in this to *ep.* 21.3-4 (see ch. 5 n. 299 for text), where Augustine said that around the time of the journey to Hippo he, and apparently others in the Thagaste community, had decided that they needed some time of concentrated scripture study. Had this aspect slipped away from Augustine somewhat over 390 with increasing responsibilities? (cf. ch. 5, p. 201 and n. 86 and p. 247f.).

after Rome, of terms (and images) such as *propheta* (*prophet**) and *templum* (*templ**), which Augustine applied to his own day and referred to often).

uera religio (*uer*+religi**): *Uera religio* is another of the many terms and concepts which debut in Augustine's works from Rome in 387/388. Occurring only ten times in just four works during the whole of the period before Augustine's trip to Hippo, 'true religion' is nevertheless the overall conception which came, by 391, to summarize most adequately Augustine's view of Christianity.¹²⁷ The word *religio* (*religi**)¹²⁸ is used throughout the period (beginning in *Acad.* 2.2.5, twice, both times in direct connection with Christianity) by itself, but its use in the phrase *uera religio* is an especially significant development. The heavy use of *religio* in *uera rel.*¹²⁹ supports the idea that this term had replaced *philosophia* (just as *uera religio* has replaced *uera philosophia*) as Augustine's general term to describe his pursuit of life between Cassiciacum and his last year at Thagaste.¹³⁰

medicina [*cus/camen*] (*medicina/us/etc*):¹³¹ Medical terminology is found in each phase of Augustine's pre-clerical Christian period. First appearing in *beata u.* (and 11 times total in the *Dialogues*), the early uses of *medicina* are typified by those in *sol.* where one encounters normal references to physicians, etc.¹³² and references to the medicine needed by the soul to enable ascent to God.¹³³ These types of occurrences continue in the period after Milan in *quant.*,¹³⁴ but in *mor. ecc.* the addition of the medicine of salvation may be noted.¹³⁵ There is virtually no use of *medicina* at Thagaste after *mor. Man.*¹³⁶ until *uera rel.*, where the term appears seven times. In this last work written before Hippo, the use is reflective of the fact, detailed in chapter five (*e.g.* p. 217-221), that as Augustine's early ecclesial

¹²⁷ cf. *e.g.* its selection as the title of the last treatise Augustine wrote in this period. The beginning of this phrase in Rome marks a shift beyond the overarching concept of 'true philosophy' found in the *Dialogues*.

¹²⁸ occasionally used to refer to non-Christian religion.

¹²⁹ the numbers given in Table 13 do not include the title of *uera rel.* Also see ch. 5, p. 210, for various words which are used to qualify *religio* in *uera rel.*

¹³⁰ see the entries in Table 17 under (*esp.*) *philosophia* and *plato(nicus)* which display a dramatic decline in the frequency of these terms between 386 and 391. They are resurrected somewhat in *uera rel.* as part of an argument that 'true philosophy' is subsumed under 'true religion' (see *esp. uera rel.* 1.1-5.8).

¹³¹ see the n. 14 in Table 13 for search criteria. See also the definition by Coyle based on *mor. ecc.* in *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 89.

¹³² with no spiritual/religious connotation or function.

¹³³ *e.g. sol.* 1.6.12; 1.14.25; 1.15.27.

¹³⁴ see *quant.* 22.38 for 'normal' use and 33.75 for the 'medicine' of the soul.

¹³⁵ *mor. ecc.* 28.55.

¹³⁶ see the reference to Christ as physician in *mor. Man.* 11.22, which speaks of the soul requiring spiritual medicine to reach happiness.

understanding crystallized a significant part of his view of the church was the mediation of salvific healing (esp. through local churches) and Christian health (*i.e.* spiritual growth).

pietas (*pieta**): This word is used infrequently throughout most of Augustine's early Christian writings. Although not abundant, as a term found in many of the writings of this period, it provides – along with terms like *c(h)aritas*, *credo*, *auctoritas*, *colo*, *disciplina*, *christus*, *mysterium* and *apostolus* – a backdrop of religious activity and attention to the spiritual life in his Christian understanding.

paeniteo/entia (*paenit**, *poenit**): This term occurs only three times at Cassiciacum (in *Acad.* 2.7.16 and 3.4.7, and *beata u.* 2.10).¹³⁷ It appears twice in *mor. ecc.* (10.16 and 34.76)¹³⁸ and once, with the sense of 'turning back', in *mor. Man.* 2.4. Up to this point, none of the uses communicates an idea of formal repentance or penance. In *Gn. a. Man.*, however, other than the quote of 2 Timothy 2.25 (in 2.22.34), the two uses of '*ad poenitentiam peccatorum*' in 2.29.43 (especially the first) may have the primary meaning of 'penance'.¹³⁹ This sense may also be picked up in *uera rel.* in 6.10 and, to a lesser extent, 14.27.¹⁴⁰ These later uses, if *paenitentia* is used as 'penance', may be significant since they would suggest a possible area of familiarity with an ecclesiastical process that emerged *after* Rome (and esp. after *mor. ecc.*) and so hint at ecclesiastical associations at Thagaste.¹⁴¹

superbia (*superbia/am/etc.*, *superbus/um/etc.*) and *humilitas* (*humilitas/atis/etc.*): These terms are found in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* but are not common (*superbia* occurs once in each except, somewhat surprisingly, in *sol.*; *humilitas* occurs only once in *ord.*) and is not found at Milan (*i.e.* in *imm. an.*, or in *quant.* immediately following). Use of *superbia* increases some in *mor. ecc.*¹⁴² but only significantly

¹³⁷ each time in the sense of 'feeling sorry' about something (in *Acad.* connected with rebukes).

¹³⁸ both times with the meaning 'repentance', although there is certainly a difference in the two uses since 10.16 speaks of the 'repentance' of God.

¹³⁹ see *PL* 34. 220; they are so taken by R.J. Teske in his translation, *FC* 84 (1991), 140.

¹⁴⁰ in this latter case, the primary sense is repentance, but the context suggests that there is some process involved. The two other occurrences in *uera rel.* have no possible connotation of penance.

¹⁴¹ a very speculative comment, since information about ecclesiastical practices could have come from a number of sources, but one which is at least a possibility. After his departure from the church in Milan, no explicit account of Augustine taking part in any regular church services or practices exists until his visit to Hippo (though it is possible to interpret various comments made by Augustine to imply that he at least visited churches in Rome, Carthage, and Thagaste (*cf. mor. ecc.* 33.69f. or *ciu.* 8.22)). Yet, there are reasons to suppose that he did in fact participate occasionally in corporate Catholic observances and certainly grew in familiarity with the activities of local congregations, *cf. ch.* 5, p. 211f. (esp. 219-220 and 223-225) and 228f. (esp. 231-233).

¹⁴² where Augustine spoke of pride as something which hinders the progress of worthy souls by cutting them off from God (*mor. ecc.* 12.20; see also 21.38 though the connection is less direct), and

in the later Thagaste period, beginning in *Gn. a. Man.* (where *humilitas* occurs once). Towards the end of *mus.* (all nine occurrences are from bk. 6) and in *uera rel.* (13 times), *superbia* is common and *humilitas* is now occasional (four times in *uera rel.*). This may reflect the undercurrent of increasing concern which Augustine felt about the possibility of an official Christian position in the institutional church or his own ascetic community, something which was increasingly probable.¹⁴³

oro (oro, ora)*:¹⁴⁴ *Oro* and its derivatives are used throughout the period with the common links to both rhetoric and prayer. Due to the difficulty in discerning the significance of these uses, however, careful tabulation was abandoned. The total results are given in the last table simply to point out the scope for future study.¹⁴⁵

The next group of terms (see Tables 14 and 15) are those which could be said to have an ascetic or 'monastic' element. This thesis has argued that Augustine's first identifiable ecclesiology took the practicable form of a 'monastic' synthesis just prior to his trip to Hippo in 391 but that this 'monasticism' was not articulated much before this point – for example in any founding of a 'monastery' at Thagaste. Hence, terms which might illuminate developments or practices in Augustine's theology or religion along ascetic and 'monastic' lines have been tabulated.

continentia (continen)*:¹⁴⁶ This word occurs first at Cassiciacum (once in both *Acad.* and *ord.*). Its frequency rises slightly at Milan and Rome, occurring a total of 12 times in *imm. an.*, *quant.*, *mor. ecc.*, and *lib. arb.*, before becoming infrequent in the African works after the four appearances in *mor. Man.*¹⁴⁷ This pattern of familiarity but rare usage at Cassiciacum, of increased (but not heavy) usage between *imm. an.* and *mor. Man.*, and then virtual disappearance in the works begun after returning to Africa, is shared with some other words in the group (*e.g. frater/es* and *ieiunium*).¹⁴⁸ Given the enduring importance of the

in admiration of the 'fathers' of Christian coenobitical communities being able to lead without any pride (*mor. ecc.* 31.67, twice). *Humilitas* occurs once at Rome.

¹⁴³ due to a number of factors, including Augustine's own personal progress in the faith and his reputation, the hardening of his vocational direction, and natural developments in his community.

¹⁴⁴ see Table 13.

¹⁴⁵ cf. n. 82. Undoubtedly, the 'vocal' emphasis of the subject matter in *mag.* and *mus.* in part accounts for the discrepancy between the relative frequency and absence of *oro* (and derivatives) in the earlier and later parts of the period. Along with *ieiunium*, *lectio*, and other words, *oro* re-emphasizes the caution that frequency range may reflect random factors like subject matter.

¹⁴⁶ cf. A. Zumkeller, 'Abstinentia-Continentia', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 1/2 (1986), 33-40.

¹⁴⁷ there are only two appearances in *Gn. a. Man.* and one in *mus.* after this.

¹⁴⁸ cf. also *continentia*, *ieiunium*, or *lectio*; specifically noteworthy is the lack of frequency of such terms in *uera rel.* where one might have hoped to see them as evidence towards increasingly ascetic or 'monastic' terminology.

concept of continence to Augustine,¹⁴⁹ this pattern might reflect the possibility that in addition to certain terms being thrown up in the interim period between Milan and Thagaste and seized upon for future consideration others were absorbed and adopted to such an extent that they came to be taken for granted.¹⁵⁰ Such a development may have occurred in the case of 'continence'.

pater (*pater, patr**): Like *continentia*, *pater* is found in works from each of Augustine's pre-clerical, Christian residences. The usage is considerable and varied throughout the period. In their context,¹⁵¹ the most significant occurrences are in *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* where Augustine referred to the 'fathers' of various coenobitical houses (*mor. ecc.* 31.67). *Frater* (*frater, fratr**)¹⁵² appears in *Acad.* (three times), figures prominently in *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.*, but thereafter occurs only twice in *uera rel.*, probably reflecting the ascetic stimulus at Rome in 387/388.

ieiunium/us (*ieiuni**): The word for 'fasting', *ieiunium*, occurs once at Cassiciacum (in *beata u.* 2.8, simply indicating 'hunger'), four times in *mor. ecc.*, and just once in later works (in *mus.*). The four occurrences in *mor. ecc.* are examples of Augustine's desire to present high Catholic Christian ideals in contrast to Manichee ascetic practices. Despite his praising the practices of various ascetic Catholics in the final chapters of *mor. ecc.*, the almost total lack of later usage of these same terms or descriptions highlights the influence of the genre of Augustine's different works on vocabulary. The works following *quant.* do not tend to give much information regarding daily or regular activities; these must be deduced from Augustine's observations and more general comments. In the case of 'fasting', this practice may have been considered and adopted as a regular part of life at Rome and then not referred to again because it had been absorbed as a regular element of Christian life. Augustine was not drawn to extreme ascetic pursuits, but surely fasting need not be such. Indeed, asceticism of any kind without fasting would be surprising, and this practice may well have been part of his regular life in the Thagaste community from the beginning. The implication of the virtual

¹⁴⁹ cf. the *Confessions*' account of the period 384-388 and the obvious affinity for the term at the time in which the *Confessions* were written. Indeed, in light of the conversion account in the *Confessions*, it is not surprising to find *continentia* appearing more significantly in Augustine's first works – one might expect from the *Confessions* (esp. *conf.* 8.11.27) that 'lady Continence' would figure more prominently, but in fact it is the lady 'Philosophy' who figures in the *Dialogues* (e.g. *Acad.* 2.2.6; 2.3.7; cf. *Acad.* 1.1.3).

¹⁵⁰ Augustine's work at Thagaste on language and music is, not surprisingly, devoid of many comments about the details of the religious life. *Uera rel.*, however, seems to assume the ascetic perfection described of devout Catholics in *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* (cf. *uera rel.* 3.5).

¹⁵¹ and apart from references to God the 'Father' (see *trinitas* above).

¹⁵² for general articles, see H.J. Sieben, *Voces* (1980), 296.

disappearance of this term then is not necessarily a lack of fasting but probably the lack of information in the Thagaste works (because of subject matter and style) about daily life in the community.¹⁵³ As described in chapters four and five, at Thagaste, Augustine's attention seems to have shifted from specific religious practices to the concepts underlying his spiritual goals for his relationship to God and other Christians.

lectio (lecti)*: The occurrence of this term only twice in the whole period (once in both *mor. ecc.* and *mus.*) does not reveal any focus by Augustine on the practice of reading in community (*i.e.* any indication of the 'in *lectionibus*' described of the Christian coenobitical communities in *mor. ecc.* 31.67).¹⁵⁴ Yet, there is evidence of considerable personal study by Augustine and involvement in discussion and disputation (often with considerable religious content) from Cassiciacum to Thagaste. Such reading or study itself is not discussed or commended explicitly anywhere in Augustine's Thagaste writings, for example, as part of a regulated pattern of life. This, however, does not necessarily indicate that it was not a regular practice for him, or for other members of the community.¹⁵⁵

seruus dei (seru+deus/um/etc)*:¹⁵⁶ Despite common references in the literature to Augustine in the pre-clerical period as a *seruus dei*,¹⁵⁷ a phrase which Luc Verheijen describes as one 'often used in a technical way to mean monks and monastic life',¹⁵⁸ the use of these terms together as a specific designation is not at all common in the period 386-391. Even the modest number of conjunctions in the tables is misleading. Table 14 (and n. 18, 20, 23, and 26) also demonstrates that

¹⁵³ illustrations of the limitations of this kind of study were also seen in working with other words such as *lectio*; see discussion following. In his commentary on *mor. ecc.* 31.67 (lines 1114-1117: 'ut neminen ... ualetudini', see Augustine's *De Moribus* (1978), 407 *ad fin.*-408), Coyle observes that 'The principle of eating only what was necessary to maintain bodily health had been already practiced at Cassiciacum: cf. *sol.* I, 10:17 ... Therefore in *mor. I* Augustine is doing more than reporting an objective fact; he is expressing a personal conviction: to consume only what is necessary for the maintenance of good health is a rule he had made his own'.

¹⁵⁴ cf. Possidius' description of Thagaste life in *uita Aug.* 3.

¹⁵⁵ cf. *Gn. a. Man.* and the implication in *mor. Man.* 14.32, see Appendix C n. 11 and ch. 4, p. 159f. Again, simple consideration of the frequency of a term leaves one in the dark about an important aspect of religious practice. In general, however, the studies of terms with ascetic connotations seem to reinforce the danger of assuming that later practices described by Augustine himself later in *op. mon.* 29.37 were in consistent use early on at Thagaste, thus making the community there a monastery – a possible flaw in the argument of Lawless, *Augustine ... Monastic Rule* (1987), 45-58; cf. ch. 4, p. 181f. (esp. 183-185).

¹⁵⁶ cf. L.J. Van der Lof, 'The Threefold Meaning of *Servi Dei* in ... Augustine', *Aug. Stud.* 12 (1981), 43-60; see Table 14 n. 17.

¹⁵⁷ which follows his own implication in *ciu.* 22.8 (see ch. 4 n. 246) and s. 355.2 (see ch. 5 n. 283); see for example P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1967), 132-137.

¹⁵⁸ L. Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts* 4.32-35 (1979), 27.

many of the (especially early) conjunctions come in quotes from scripture.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, all the conjunctions in treatises are verbal forms (*i.e.* of *seruire deo*). The conjunction of *seruire* and *deus* exhibits the pattern of minimal usage and then development in *quant.*¹⁶⁰ and *mor. ecc.*, but all of the occurrences are indicative of the general concept of serving God rather than of a specific designation.¹⁶¹ As chapter four noted, the only nominal form in 386-391 is found in *ep. 20.2 (seruos dei, c. early 391)*.

seruus domini (seru+domin*)*:¹⁶² Aside from its presence in passages of scripture quoted by Augustine,¹⁶³ the conjunction of these two terms occurs once in *sol.* (1.15.30), once in *mus* (6.17.58), and once in *uera rel.* (40.75).¹⁶⁴ *Seru*+christ** occurs only in scriptural citations (of Gal. 1.10 in *mor. ecc.* 21.38 and Rom. 14.18 in *mor. Man.* 14.32). These occurrences continue to illustrate the early focus on serving God, as distinct from identity with a specific class of 'servants of God'. They also reinforce that this early idea of serving God was consciously supported (and probably generated by) Augustine's interaction with scripture.

castus (castus/um/etc, castita, castiss*)*:¹⁶⁵ These terms for purity and chastity occur 35 times in the writings up through *uera rel.* Found occasionally in the *Dialogues* (esp. *sol.*) with various meanings, their heavy use in *mor. ecc.* and decreasing use over the rest of the period is in line with other terms that have an ascetic association. The absence of these terms from *uera rel.* is noteworthy.¹⁶⁶

A concept which underlies Augustine's conception of the religious life is that of love. Hence, the next three terms under consideration are words for 'love', specifically, *amor*, *diligo*, and *c(h)aritas*.

¹⁵⁹ supporting the observations of chapter four (and of Van der Lof), see esp. ch. 4 n. 241 *ad fin.*

¹⁶⁰ once in 34.78, a quote of Mt. 4.10 (*cf.* Dt. 6.13).

¹⁶¹ see ch. 4, p. 175-180, for more detailed discussion of this phrase, for the few direct connections between *seruus/seruire* and *deus* in the period, and for later references in which this conjunction was used to describe Augustine in the early period.

¹⁶² see ch. 4 n. 241.

¹⁶³ *i.e.* Dt. 6.13 (in *mor. ecc.* 6.13); Mt. 4.9-10 (in *uera rel.* 38.74); and Mt. 6.24 (in *mor. ecc.* 24.44 and *uera rel.* 46.88).

¹⁶⁴ where the statement is more a contrast of the wicked being made to serve the servants of God than him.

¹⁶⁵ see Table 15 n. 30. See also the article by A. Zumkeller, 'Castitas, castus', *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 781-788.

¹⁶⁶ a partial explanation for this (given the obvious decision about the time *uera rel.* was finished to pursue a recognized monastic direction), may be the conclusion in ch. 5 that, as a sort of Christian synthesis, *uera rel.* marked an achievement that created in Augustine's mind a new sense of confidence, or even determination, to move ahead with specific ascetic/'monastic' developments and practices. The more sweeping nature of the work itself also may be responsible for the lack of detailed descriptions of religious practice.

amor (amor*):¹⁶⁷ Forms of both *amor* and diligo (dilig*+dilex*)¹⁶⁸ are common throughout Augustine's pre-clerical writings. Yet, aside from very heavy use of both terms in *mor. ecc.* (*amor* 36 times and *diligo* 41) and of *diligo* in *uera rel.* (71 times), it is difficult to see any progression in usage between the various periods represented on the table. Taken together, however, these two terms demonstrate the importance of the concept of 'love' to the young Christian Augustine throughout his pre-clerical period.

c(h)aritas (c(h)arita*): This most common Christian word for 'love' is found less frequently in the *Dialogues* than *amor* or *diligo*. However, a marked increase in use in *mor. ecc.* (44 times)¹⁶⁹ and consistent use during the rest of the period may exemplify Augustine's gradual move to more commonly Christian terms over the period. One significant use of this term is in the conjunction fides+spes+caritas (fid*+spe*+c(h)arita*)¹⁷⁰ which occurs ten times in the works up through *uera rel.* The *Dialogues* contain the bulk of these appearances (four are in *sol.*) showing that the formula was significant in Augustine's earliest Catholic understanding (and most likely indicative of a focus in his early reading of the Christian scriptures).

The final group of terms are those that pertain to worship. The tables show that *colo*, *adoro*, and *cultus/or* enjoy an increase in frequency, to varying degrees, during 386-391 and *colo* emerges as the dominant (though not exclusive) term for worship in Augustine's understanding of 'true religion'.¹⁷¹

ueneratio (uener*, uenerati*):¹⁷² Of the terms for worship considered, only *ueneratio/uenero(r)* does not increase in use over the period, though it is found throughout. *Ueneratio* appears just twice (once in both *ord.* and *uera rel.*). The most frequent use of *ueneror* comes in *quant.* (five times), but in *mor. ecc.* and

¹⁶⁷ for more information, see G. Bardy, 'Amor et charité' in *BA* 35 (1959), 529-531; as well as R.T. Otten, 'Amor, Caritas, and Dilectio' in C. Mohrmann, *Mélanges* (1963), 73-83; and 'Amor' by D. Dideberg, *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 1/2 (1986), 294. Due to difficulties in screening the results, verbal derivative forms of *amo* are not included in the tables. The basic present indicative active forms gave around 60 results and a sampling indicated a spread similar to *amor*.

¹⁶⁸ see Table 15 n. 29.

¹⁶⁹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 89, notes in his brief summary of this word in *mor. ecc.* the 'In *mor. I* *caritas* is usually interchanged with *amor* and *dilectio*, when the love spoken of refers to God ... but *caritas* always refers to God ... whereas *amor* and *dilectio* can also be applied to lesser things'. See also 'Caritas' by D. Dideberg, *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 5/6 (1992), 730-743.

¹⁷⁰ cf. C. Harrison's chapter 6: 'Faith, Hope, and Love' in *Beauty and Revelation in ... Augustine* (1992), 239f.; cf. also ch. 1, p. 20 n. 136, 137.

¹⁷¹ cf. ch. 5, p. 231f.

¹⁷² see Table 16 and n. 34.

mor. Man. (where *adoro*, *cultus/ores*, and *colo* first appear significantly) it is found only once (perhaps marking a conscious shift in terminology stimulated at Rome?).

confessio/sus/fiteor (confess, confite*)*: More frequent than the other nouns for worship in the *Dialogues*, *confessio* fades in usage almost entirely and is found once (in *Gn. a. Man.*) after Augustine returned to North Africa.¹⁷³ The verbal form, is found more commonly and in fairly equal measure throughout the period. It is used both to denote a statement and in a Christian sense of praise and worship.

adoro (ador)*:¹⁷⁴ Slightly more frequent than *ueneratio/etc*, *adoro* is the only term for worship to debut in *quant.* (once). Then it is used several more (three) times in *mor. ecc.* in line with the pattern observed previously for many other religious terms. It is found in later works such as *Gn. a. Man.* (once) and *uera rel.* (five times). The increased frequency of this term in *uera rel.* (where the uses of *adoro* and derivatives are quite varied),¹⁷⁵ along with those of *cultus* and *colo*, reinforces the important place of worship (both personal and corporate) in Augustine's understanding of true religion.¹⁷⁶

cultus/or (cult)*:¹⁷⁷ The use of this term to denote worship or worshippers reveals an interesting development. *Cultus/cultor* is found only once in the sense of 'worship(per)' in Augustine's pre-baptismal writings, and a consideration of this and other early cases shows that, in the earlier uses, the 'worship' or 'worshippers' refers entirely to non-Christians (e.g. '*idolorum cultorum*', *mor. ecc.* 35.77).¹⁷⁸ The first (two) favorable usages of *cultus/or* come in *Gn. a. Man.* Table 16 also shows that this term suddenly occurs with great frequency in *uera rel.* (13 times). Consideration of particular occurrences in *uera rel.* reveals a connection between *cultus* and *religio* and also that, while there are uses which refer to Catholic

¹⁷³ in light of its obvious connotations of praise in the *Confessions* it would be interesting to trace the revival of *confessio*'s usage in connection with worship. However, influence on or motivation for the development of Augustine's early ecclesiology by progression from personal patterns of worship to corporate patterns does not seem to be suggested by these word studies. On 'Confessio, confiteri' more generally in Augustine, see C. Mayer, *Aug.-Lex.* v. 1, fasc. 7/8 (1994), 1122-1134.

¹⁷⁴ see Table 16 n. 32.

¹⁷⁵ it is found in *uera rel.* 38.71 in the quote of Mt. 4.9-10 concerning the temptation of Christ to worship Satan; connected with religious rites in *uera rel.* 55.108; found in *uera rel.* 55.110 in conjunction with Rev. 19.10 (worship of God not angels); and used of general pagan worship of the world in *uera rel.* 55.112.

¹⁷⁶ as discussed in ch. 5, e.g. p. 231-233.

¹⁷⁷ see Table 16 n. 33.

¹⁷⁸ see also *mor ecc.* 29.60, '*simulacrorum cultores*' (CSEL 90. 63).

Christians, the concept of idolatry, and the association of *cultus* with such terms as *superstitio*, *daemon*, and *phantasma*, continued.¹⁷⁹

colo (colu/cole*)*: The pattern of occurrences observed for *adoro* and *cultus* is highlighted in the table entry for *colo*.¹⁸⁰ The term is used infrequently before *quant.* In *quant.* and *mor. ecc.*, however, there is marked increase in usage – it is the most frequently employed worship term in *mor. ecc.* However, while Augustine continued to use *colo* after his return to Africa, there is no increase (in fact there is a slight decrease) in the frequency of the term until *uera rel.*¹⁸¹ In *uera rel.*, however, there is again a dramatic increase (*colo* is used 33 times). The pattern of frequency observed in this group of worship terms seems to indicate that the concept of worship was an increasingly significant one in Augustine's developing appreciation of the church, first at Rome and then later at Thagaste. It may be one of the ecclesiastical objects of focus stimulated at Milan and Rome¹⁸² which was kept in the background of Augustine's ecclesiological consideration at Thagaste while he pursued other lines of personal and communal development until he had come to a first overall understanding of Christianity. Then worship was reconsidered as something which had to find a place in any complete structure for Christian living (as seen in ch. 5).

praedico (praedic)*: This term is found only once in the *Dialogues* (*ord.* 2.5.16, in general reference to those who teach about God) and once in *quant.* (33.76 where it refers to Paul's declaration, *cf.* 1 Cor. 3.1f.) before becoming much more common in *mor. ecc.* (where there are eight occurrences). *Praedico* remains fairly frequent in the other Thagaste writings (though often without Christian connection, *cf.* the uses in *mus.*), but in *uera rel.* the senses of handing on the Christian tradition (*e.g.* of the New Testament miracles, *uera rel.* 25.47) or praising God's works (*uera rel.* 54.106) and especially corporate preaching (*e.g.* *uera rel.* 6.11) are found.

Several other terms were traced that have been included in the last Table (17) for interest and as comparison to the results for those commented on above. Also, searches were made for a number of terms (of varying significance) which were not found in any of

¹⁷⁹ *e.g.* *cultus simulacroum* in *uera rel.* 25.47 and 38.69; *religio cultus hominum mortuorum*; *religio cultus bestiarum*; *religio humanorum operum cultus* (all in *uera rel.* 55.107), and [*deorum*] *multorum cultores* in *uera rel.* 25.46.

¹⁸⁰ see Table 16 n. 35.

¹⁸¹ occurring only once in *lib. arb.*, *mag.*, *mus.*, and *mor. Man.* together.

¹⁸² *cf. conf.* 9.4.14-9.7.15 and ch. 3.

the works.¹⁸³ Among the terms which gave results far too numerous to deal with were *sapientia*¹⁸⁴ and *corpus*.¹⁸⁵

It cannot be re-emphasized too strongly that these word counts and the interpretation of the results given here do not stand alone and must be read with the main argument of the thesis chapters. The results and interpretation here do not carry any of the thesis arguments but simply provide useful confirmation and possible illustration of various points that have been made in the main text.

¹⁸³ e.g. *Donatus*, *competentes*, *lac paruulorum*, *sponsa* (these last two terms figure significantly in A.G. Oden's study of the *Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's 'Enarrationes in Psalmos'* (1990)), *deprecatio*, *ualetudinarium*, *ecclesia uel anima*. As in the commentary, these are representative terms of all forms of the word.

¹⁸⁴ forms of which appear 497 times in the treatises. J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 92, notes that *sapientia* 'is defined in *Acad.* as "rerum humanarum diuinarumque scientia"; but true *sapientia* concerns "human things" only insofar as they direct the *sapiens* to God'.

¹⁸⁵ forms of which appear 791 times. Only one of these, however, is a use of the 'body of Christ' in direct connection with '*ecclesia*', i.e. in the quote of Col. 1.18 in *Gn. a. Man.* 2.24.37.

APPENDIX C

AUGUSTINE'S USE OF SCRIPTURE IN 387/388

The Christian scriptures were central to Augustine's development throughout the period 386-391. All of Augustine's extant early works through 391 contain scriptural quotations and allusions (except *imm. an.*), but it was during the period 387-388 and in *mor. ecc.* in particular that Augustine began using the Bible copiously in his writing.¹ This appendix details the use of scripture in the writings begun at Rome in 387/388 in: 1. a table of all the scripture references in *quant.*, *mor. ecc.*, and *mor. Man.*; and 2. a discussion which highlights the increase in Augustine's scriptural use in 387-388, comments on the nature of the use during this time (esp. relative to later use), and suggests some summary implications.²

1. Summary of Augustine's Use of Scripture, 387-388: The following table, based on the indices in *CSEL* 89 (p. 232) and 90 (p. 157-160), gives a general overview of Augustine's use of scripture.³ Notes on particularly relevant developments in scripture usage are given. The references appear in order of the biblical texts not in order of appearance in Augustine's works.

Table 18: Scripture usage in *quant.*, *mor. ecc.*, and *mor. Man.*

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	Augustine References
Genesis	1.1 2.4 5 allusions ⁴	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 10.16 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 10.16 <i>mor. ecc.</i>

¹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 144f. Also, A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Biblia Augustiniana A.T. – Le livre de la Sagesse* (1970), 30, and *Saint Augustin et la Bible, Bible de Tous les Temps* v. 3 (1986), 46. More generally, see the latter of la Bonnardière's two works, p. 27-47: 'L'initiation biblique d'Augustin'. Coyle provides a very useful chapter on 'The Bible in Manichaeism and Augustine's Response' in his book (p. 144-192), including sections on 'The Bible in Manichaeism' (p. 145-149), the Bible in Augustine's Catholicism (p. 150-153), and a direct and complete comparison of Augustine's biblical text with the Vulgate (p. 158-172).

² many specific references and allusions to scripture are cited and discussed in the body of the thesis.

³ esp. for comparison with that noted in the *Cassiciacum Dialogues* (see ch. 1, Table 1).

⁴ in this case, the table indicates that there are two quotations of Genesis in *mor. ecc.* (and none in *quant.* or *mor. Man.*) and that there are an additional five allusions to Genesis in *mor. ecc.* Generally, the allusions indicated in *CSEL* have not been detailed (unless there is only one, in which case the reference is given), nor have those identified by others been given, since the objective is simply to provide a summary of Augustine's increasing familiarity with and use of the biblical text.

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	Augustine References
Exodus	20.5	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.64
Leviticus	2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
Deuteronomy	4.24 6.4 6.5 9 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.64 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 8.13; 9.14; 11.18 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
Judges	1 allusion (19.25)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.63
1 Samuel	1 allusion (17.43)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 18.33
4 Kings	1 allusion (4.28)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.63
2 Esdras	1 allusion (9.17)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 27.54
Tobit	3 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
Job⁵	1f. (passim) * 2 allusions (17.14, 25.6)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.42 <i>mor. Man.</i> 13.28
Psalms	4.7 43.22 50.12 72.28 88.9 115.15 8 allusions 2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 9.14; 9.15 <i>quant.</i> 33.75; <i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.36 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 15.26 (x 2) <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.43 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
Proverbs	16.32 *	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.43
Ecclesiastes	1.2f. * 1 allusion (1.2) 1 allusion (11.5) *	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 21.39 <i>quant.</i> 33.76 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 10.16
Wisdom⁶	1.5 6.13-21 8.1 8.3 8.3f. 8.5 8.7 9.9 9.17 9.18 4 allusions 2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 17.32 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.27 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.27 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28 (x 2) <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>

⁵ for the Wisdom books and Romans, references from *mor. ecc.* marked (*) are from Rome (others are probably from after Augustine's return to Africa) according to Coyle's breakdown of *mor. ecc.* into a Roman Draft: 1.2-12.21; 15.25; 19.35-30.64; and African Additions: 1.1; 13.22-14.24; 15.26-18.34; 31.65-35.80. These indications are referred to in the thesis and following notes and discussion.

⁶ although references to the book of Wisdom were probably cited in North Africa (in 388), the use of the Wisdom books generally indicates interest and reading at Rome. Such reading probably reinforced

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	Augustine References
Sirach	2.4f. * 19.1 * 24.32 * 27.6 * 5 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.43 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.45 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 28.56 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.43 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
Isaiah	45.7 2 allusions	<i>mor. Man.</i> 7.9 (x 3) <i>mor. ecc.</i>
Ezekiel	4 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
Hosea	1 allusion (13.14)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.64
Jonah	1 allusion (4.2)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 27.54
2 Maccabees	1 allusion (7)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.43
4 Esdras	1 allusion (2.20-23)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 27.53
Matthew	4.10 6.24 7.6 7.7 10.26 10.31 11.27 12.34 15.11 19.19 22.40 16 allusions ⁷ 6 allusions ⁸	<i>quant.</i> 34.78 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.44 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> 18.33 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 17.31 <i>mor. Man.</i> 13.28 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 17.31 <i>mor. Man.</i> 13.27 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28; <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.31 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 33.71; 26.49 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 28.57; 29.59 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
Mark	4 allusions 6 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
Luke	2.14 4.8 11.9 12.2 12.7 12.49 16.13 4 allusions 6 allusions	<i>mor. Man.</i> 7.10 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.44 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 17.31 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. Man.</i> 13.28 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.64 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.44 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>

Augustine's focus on the ideal of individual piety and the pursuit of God and his wisdom (in contrast to a more collective ideal). Three of the possible allusions indicated in *CSEL*, if actual, would come from Rome (*i.e.* *mor. ecc.* 10.17 (Wis. 4.8, twice) and 19.35 (6.19f.)); however, they are certainly not clear.

⁷ including allusions to the parable of the wheat and the weeds: Mt. 13.3-30 (*mor. ecc.* 33.76); Mt. 13.24-30 (*mor. ecc.* 31.68); and Mt. 13.36-43 (*mor. ecc.* 33.76).

⁸ there is some overlap with Mark and Luke (see the individual listings in *CSEL* 90).

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	Augustine References
John	1.3 1.4 1.17 1.18 17.3 5 allusions 3 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.27 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> 9.14 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 25.47 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
Acts	4 allusions ⁹	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
Romans ¹⁰	1.25 * 5.3f. * 5.5 6.8 * 8.20 8.28 * (also in N. Af. draft) 8.29 8.35 * 8.36 * 8.38f. * 8.39 * 11.36 12.2 * 13.8 * 13.10 * 13.14 14.1-15.3 14.2-4 14.6 14.12-14 14.14 14.15 14.21 18 allusions 4 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.44 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 23.42 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 13.22; 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.35 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 13.23 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 8.13; 11.18 (x 2); 16.26; 26.50 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 8.13 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 9.14; 9.15 (x 3) <i>mor. ecc.</i> 9.18 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 11.19; 12.21 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 14.24 (x 3); 16.29 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 21.39 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 28.56 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 26.50 (x 3) <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.31 <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.32 ¹¹ <i>mor. ecc.</i> 33.71 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.35 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 33.71 <i>mor. ecc.</i> "; <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.31 (x 2) <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
1 Corinthians	1.23f. 1.24 5.6 6.11 6.12 6.12-7.7 6.13 7.7	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 13.22 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 16.28; 29.59 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.45 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 35.78 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 33.72 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 35.78 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 33.71 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 35.79

⁹ including Acts 4.32-35 (*mor. ecc.* 31.67); J.K. Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 295, 403-406) concurs with Verheijen's recognition of this passage as 'an implicit reference to Acts 4:32-35'.

¹⁰ in general, there is quite as great a familiarity with Romans at Rome as in Africa; although in the African 'additions' the attention to Rom. 11.36 and ch. 14 is 'new' (cf. n. 5).

¹¹ Augustine gave this much text 'for the sake of those who are indolent in reading and studying the divine scriptures' (*mor. Man.* 14.32: *Planius hoc indicant superiora et sequentia, quae commemorare longum est quidem, sed propter eos qui ad diuinas scripturas legendas et pertractandas pigri sunt, totum istum locum retexere cogimur.* CSEL 90. 116). Clearly, he either had Romans to hand or had memorized this significant portion when he wrote *mor. ecc.* Regardless, there is an emphasis on the ideal of scripture study and memory, strongly suggesting this as a regular practice at Thagaste.

Books of Scripture	Scripture References and Allusions	Augustine References
1 Corinthians (continued)	7.14 8.4-13 8.6 10.19-25 10.28-11.1 11.19 15.22 15.47-49 15.54f. 15.56 1 allusion (3.2) 13 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 35.79 <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.33 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 14.24 <i>mor. Man.</i> 14.34 <i>mor. Man.</i> " <i>mor. ecc.</i> 17.30 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.35 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.36 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 30.64 <i>mor. ecc.</i> " <i>quant.</i> 33.76 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
2 Corinthians	4.16 4.18	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.36; 35.80 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 20.37
Galatians	1.10 5.9 5.13 3 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 21.38 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 24.45 <i>mor. Man.</i> 11.22 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
Ephesians	3.14-19 3.17f. 4.13 2 allusions (4.22, 24) 4 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 18.33 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 18.34 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 10.17 <i>quant.</i> 28.54 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
Philippians	2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
Colossians	2.8 1 allusion (3.9-10) 6 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 21.38 (x 2) <i>quant.</i> 28.54 <i>mor. ecc.</i>
1 Thessalonians	1 allusion (4.11)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 31.67
2 Thessalonians	1 allusion (3.8-12)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 32.70
1 Timothy	6.10 7 allusions 1 allusion (4.1-3)	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 19.35 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i> 18.65
Titus	1.15 2 allusions 2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 53.71 <i>mor. ecc.</i> <i>mor. Man.</i>
Hebrews	2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
James	4 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
1 Peter	2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i>
1 John	3.2 5.21 2 allusions	<i>mor. ecc.</i> 12.21 <i>mor. ecc.</i> 21.38 <i>mor. ecc.</i>

2. Scripture in *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*: The increase in scripture usage in the writings of 387/388 is clear from a comparison of Table 18, above, with Table 1 of scripture references and allusions in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* (see ch. 1). Scripture was central to Augustine's beliefs immediately following his conversion¹² and it was stressed during his baptismal initiation into the church.¹³ The new amount and breadth of scriptural citation implies that reading continued after Cassiciacum and that there was definite progress.¹⁴ Furthermore, in 387/388 Augustine adopted the role of defender of the Catholic church in *mor. ecc.* against those who attacked Catholic Christianity especially at the point of the scriptures (*cf. mor. ecc.* 1.2). Thus, the increase in attention to and use of the biblical text in *mor. ecc.* is not surprising.

The Manichees rejected the Old Testament and most of the New Testament, making it necessary for Augustine to demonstrate the validity of both.¹⁵ He did this in *mor. ecc.* by showing the harmony between them and by presenting brief spiritual interpretations of passages which the Manichees found problematic. Coyle notes that

In following this method Augustine offers some idea of his own opinion of Scripture at the time. For him the authority he asserts against the Manichaean 'pure reason' is basically constituted in the Bible ... Yet, ... Scripture alone is not enough: taken by itself it can lead only to the threshold of true belief. To acquire credence it needs the authority of the Church, which had brought Augustine himself finally to accept the divine inspiration of the Old Testament and, indeed, of any part of Scripture.¹⁶

In his discussion, Coyle looks ahead to *epist. fund.* 5 (*Ego uero euangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae conuinceret auctoritas*);¹⁷ but it is clear that at Rome Augustine would not yet have formulated such a statement.

La Bonnardière has summarized the references from the Old and New Testaments in *mor. ecc.* and their basic nature.¹⁸ Primarily, they occur as citations illustrating and/or lending authority to Augustine's arguments (*e.g. mor. ecc.* 11.18) or serving for simple comparison with other biblical texts. (*e.g. mor. ecc.* 8.13-9.14). The

¹² *cf.* ch. 1, p. 12-15.

¹³ A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (1986), 45-46.

¹⁴ A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Le livre de la Sagesse* (1970), 32-34, notes that aside from five verses (*i.e.* Mt. 7.7; Jn. 14.6; 1 Cor. 1.24; 1 Cor. 15.54; and Col. 2.8) all the citations in *mor. ecc.* were 'new'.

¹⁵ see A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Saint Augustin et la Bible* (1986), 35, for a summary of the Manichaean critique of the New Testament. Indeed, she notes that to conclude that Augustine began a completely new 'initiation biblique' after 'lost' (with respect to the Bible) years with the Manichees would be a mistake. Augustine gained most of his early familiarity with the Bible from the Manichees (p. 34-35). His Pauline attention and his sensitivity to the many heterodox interpretations of scripture in his Christian polemical writings both stem from the biblical foci of his Manichaean years (p. 36-37).

¹⁶ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 150 (*cf.* 152).

¹⁷ for an excellent discussion of this somewhat notorious passage, see G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (21986), 228f.

¹⁸ A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Le livre de la Sagesse* (1970), 30-32.

references do not serve as a basis for biblical exegesis¹⁹ – this endeavor began at Thagaste.²⁰ An example is Augustine's comments to the Manichees on eating in light of their religious dietary regulations (and theory). In *mor. ecc.* 33.71-72, brief citations and allusions to 1 Corinthians and Romans simply act as points of the argument and as part of the general discussion illustrating that Paul 'shows how all things are to be directed to the one end of charity'.²¹ *Mor. Man.* 14.31-35 is a similar, though more extended and detailed, listing of a number of passages from Romans and 1 Corinthians on what it is right to eat (contra Manichee theology), especially emphasizing the Pauline origin of these statements. Thus, even between *mor. ecc.* and *mor. Man.* there may be an extension in familiarity with the text (or awareness of others' lack of familiarity), but exegesis has yet to appear. As noted in chapter 4, exegesis for Augustine began with *Gn. a. Man.*

The most obvious aspect of Augustine's usage of scripture to the reader is his use of the Apostle Paul.²² This emphasis on Paul (in light of Manichaean admiration for him) has been noted in the thesis, but it is worth noting here a clarification on Augustine's use and reading of Romans. As noted in Table 18 (see n. 10), Augustine seems to have been as familiar with Romans while at Rome as he was after his return to North Africa. It is possible, however, that his attention to Romans 11 and 14 increased after his return.

One of the other striking aspects about Augustine's use of scripture in *mor. ecc.* is his use of the Wisdom books.²³ Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,²⁴ Wisdom, and Job, for example, first appear in this work. A simple observation on the familiarity with Wisdom books may be made (*cf.* n. 6). Namely, this familiarity possibly reflects (or encouraged) a focus on individual piety and pursuit of wisdom which continued after Augustine returned to North Africa. Such a focus may further support the idea presented in chapters four and five of Thagaste, especially initially, as a group of

¹⁹ J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 153.

²⁰ see ch. 4, p. 159f. (*esp.* n. 169).

²¹ *Hic enim ostendit quam sint ad finem caritatis haec omnia dirigenda.* CSEL 90. 77.

²² J.K. Coyle, *Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 187.

²³ A.-M. la Bonnardière, *Le livre de la Sagesse* (1970), 17. Augustine came to increased familiarity with the book of Wisdom in stages beginning probably at Rome and continuing at Thagaste and Hippo (p. 18: 'Il le cite pour la première fois à Rome au cours de l'hiver 387-388, dans un document qui a l'allure d'une profession de foi trinitaire'). Coyle (*Augustine's De Moribus* (1978), 241f.) is skeptical whether first citations were made at Rome, arguing for a later insertion, but he certainly concurs with the observed injection of the Wisdom literature to Augustine's repertoire in *mor. ecc.* While the exact time and place of the first reading of the book of Wisdom may be uncertain (*cf.* la Bonnardière 25; Coyle, 256 n. 971 – as are sources for its employment, *cf.* Coyle, 252-259), it is clear that interest in the Wisdom books did begin at Rome. In her book, la Bonnardière provides three helpful sections on Wisdom in *mor. ecc.*: 'Les premiers contacts d'Augustin avec le «Livre de la Sagesse»' (p. 19f.); 'Signification de l'insertion de péripécopes de la «Sagesse» dans le «De moribus ecclesiae catholicae I. 15-17»' (p. 25f.); and 'Source de la section du «De moribus ecclesiae catholicae I. 15-17»' (p. 29f.).

²⁴ Ecclesiastes (1.2) is also alluded to in *quant.* 33.76.

individuals with shared focus, not structured communal life.²⁵ Such implications from the Wisdom books probably may also be drawn for Augustine in Rome in 387.²⁶

In summary, the increase of scripture in 387/388 reflects Augustine's personal attraction to and continued reading of scripture. He was in the process of gaining familiarity. This increase also results from Augustine's role of defender of the Catholic church in *mor. ecc.* against the Manichees. Specific familiarity with such books as Romans or Wisdom exemplify the importance of Augustine's increased familiarity with scripture in 387/388. As he gained familiarity and tried to defend Catholic teaching and scriptures, Augustine's study and need to explain certain texts (esp. Genesis) more comprehensively against the Manichees and more simply for 'slower' Catholic believers led to the development of his own exegesis. This, as shown in chapters four and five, had considerable significance for the development of his early ecclesiology.

²⁵ some examples of this individual focus are seen in: a. *mor. ecc.* 16.27, where Augustine compared Paul's discussion of the 'wisdom and virtue of God' (Christ, *cf.* 16.28) with Old Testament Wisdom – the role of the wisdom and power of God is to give the individual 'efficacy in action and sobriety of mind' (*cf.* Wis. 8.7; the focus in *mor. ecc.* 16.28 of wisdom on Christ may tie to Augustine's general conception c. 387 and following of the individual's relationship with God made possible by Christ and modeled on Christ); b. *mor. ecc.* 17.31 *ad fin.*, where Augustine noted that, far from deterring the believer from the pursuit and love of wisdom (as the Manichees claimed), the Old Testament exhorts such love and pursuit in the strongest terms; and c. *mor. ecc.* 17.32, where Augustine spoke of the principal step towards Wisdom as the earnest 'desire of discipline' (This discipline is based on love and encourages a practice of personal piety which bring one to God, *cf.* Wis. 6.13-20).

The resolution of the preceding exemplary passages is interesting. In *mor. ecc.* 17.30 and 32, Augustine exhorted the Manichee's to accept Catholic truth and scriptures (both as one) and to throw themselves into the arms of the Catholic church. Thus, although the discussion up to this point was focused on individual pursuit and motivation for wisdom, the result is that right understanding and access to truth and wisdom are found within the overarching framework of the Catholic church.

²⁶ *e.g.* *mor. ecc.* 21.39 *ad fin.*, where Solomon is referred to in the discussion of the individual Christian ideal of the life of virtue in terms of love (*cf.* *mor. ecc.* 22.40-41). These passage are generally agreed to have been written at Rome.

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A list of Augustine's (and Ambrose's) works cited the thesis, with their abbreviations and most recent critical editions, is given in the Abbreviations. Other editions and translations which have been cited in the thesis are given here. The updated 'List of Augustine's Works' in the *Augustinus-Lexikon* (*Schlusslieferung zu Vol. 1, fasc. 1/2*: pp. I-LX, col. 1-24 (1994), XXVI-XL) gives the Latin editions available for all of Augustine's works.

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